

※2005-2006

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650 IPOD ACCESSORIES RATED

BY THE WORLD'S LEADING AUTHORITY ON IPOD + ITUNES, SINCE 2001

PICK YOUR IPOD. SELL YOUR IPOD. GET TEN MUST-HAVE ACCESSORIES. WORLD FIRSTS: AKG K701 HEADPHONE REVIEW, SNEAKS OF VAJA IVOD NANO, BELKIN TUNEBASE FM AND TUNEFM 5G/NANO, GRIFFIN ITRIP AUTO AND TUNEBUDS NANO, POWER SUPPORT SILICONE JACKET NANO, BRIEF HISTORY OF IPOD + ITUNES AND MUCH MUCH MORE.

6 iPod gear nano video 5



holiday buyer's guide Sportsuit Santa Festive gear For all iPod models

for nano, video, and all iPod models





Sidewinder" Unique hard plastic case with slide out side for earphone storage



Sportsuit Sleeve Discreet protection



Sportsuit Convertible, the ultimate sports case A slim case with adjustable armband, removable lid, handstrap and belt clip for maxium versatility.



Sportsuit Runabout For nano, shuffle & mini



Sportsuit Basic Ultra-Slim form-fitting case For all iPod models



C.E.O. Billfold Wallet Executive protection nano only



C.E.O. Card Wallet Slim executive storage nano only



C.E.O. Classic Affordable luxury with two lids and iPod case For all iPod models



Retractable cord Car Charger For iPod with dock connector



Sport Grip Silicone case



Sport Grip Extreme Rugged silicone case with carabiner and lanyard nano only

Available colors for silicone cases























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It was obvious for months that a video-equipped iPod was coming: Apple added movie playback support to iTunes, stopped updating its online collection of free music videos, and stopped telling reporters that people didn't want to squint at a tiny little display. But what it debuted on October 12 surprised nearly everyone: an iPod with a 2.5-inch, 4:3 ratio screen, \$1.99 music videos and TV shows, but no free way to convert DVDs. The battery in its low-end \$299 model can play a few episodes of Lost on-screen in a row, but not The Godfather. Is this really the best Apple could do?

No. Clued-in consumers and Apple both know that easy-to-use video playback on a wide, at least 480-pixel screen with a mass-storage device (read: hard disk or high-capacity flash memory drive) and good battery will be the winning feature combination, and that compelling content - history's best TV shows and movies - will be mandatory. The current iPod + iTunes solution comes close, but isn't quite there.

But neither are the new iPod's competitors. Sony's game system PlayStation Portable has the screen and resolution, but lacks the drive, so you have to buy new discs or tiny memory cards if you want to watch movies. Creative's Zen Vision has the hard disk and resolution, but uses an odd, non-widescreen display and mediocre software. Neither company has a compelling TV download solution, either. Our feeling: you're going to be disappointed this time next year if you've converted your entire video library for any of these devices. **Holiday 2006 will be the time for video, not now.**

Today, iLoungers are clearly divided on the value of portable video. In a poll of over 5,000 readers, only 21% cited video as their most-wanted iPod feature: replaceable batteries topped the list at 26%, and an FM tuner came in second at 24%. Yet when they were asked after the new iPod's introduction whether they'd buy it, 50% of readers said yes - 19% of them despite the fact that they were unhappy with the iPod's screen or iTunes video quality. Our belief is that the iPod's continued strength as a music player is enough to keep people happy, at least for now.

What we do know for sure is that people have wanted our Buyers' Guides to be easier to read - whether on their computer screens or printed out and carried around. So we tried something new: a widescreen format, increased font sizes, and bigger, bolder graphics. Hopefully, you'll enjoy what you see, and find it less necessary to scroll around on your computer. But regardless of whether you do or don't like it, please tell us. We want to improve, and take your suggestions seriously. As always, thanks for reading, and may your holidays be filled with many awesome iPod goodies.



Dennis Lloyd **Publisher**

A passionate, long-time fan of Apple products, **Dennis Lloyd** (dennisl@ilounge.com) was a graphic designer and DJ before creating the iPodlounge and iLounge sites. Dennis directs our forums, photo galleries, and general business affairs, which have grown under his watch to include millions of readers and numerous accolades. Happily married with one dog (Rocket the Wonderdog), one cat (Ferris), many iPods, and two turntables, he lives in and loves Irvine, California.



Jeremy Horwitz **Editor-in-Chief**

Jeremy Horwitz (jeremy@ilounge.com) has written about consumer electronics for publications ranging from Electronic Gaming Monthly to The New York Times, having founded and edited Ziff-Davis' Intelligent Gamer magazine. A cum laude graduate of Cornell Law School and author of the book Law School Insider, Jeremy presides over editorial content for both iLounge and our Guides, focusing special attention on iPod reviews and new technologies. He lives with his Siberian Husky Sake (Sah-kay) and rooms full of iPod add-ons in Irvine, CA.

Larry Angell

is iLounge's Senior Editor, specializing in daily news. Based in Ohio, Larry has covered Apple for years, owned nearly every iPod, and spent way too much on iTunes downloads. He previously worked in the mobile electronics industry with world champion car audio professionals, and currently lives with his girlfriend and cat.

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is iLounge's Chief Forum
Administrator, weekly podcast
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Air Force and the Ministry of Defense. He
lives with his wife, dog, and five iPods, and is
currently starting to like the idea of iPod video.

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No technical section of the section

iTunes... 6? Yes. Now with more video.

It took more than two years for Apple to move from iTunes 4.0 to 4.9, but only five weeks to switch from iTunes 5.0 to 6.0. The reason? Rhetorical flourish. iTunes already supported video playback, but Apple upped the ante by adding paid video downloads - 2,000 music videos (above), five TV shows, and a handful of Pixar short movies, at \$1.99 each. Plus, there are other new features: online gifting to anyone with an email address, "Just for You" personal music recommendations, customer reviews, and Front Row media center integration (below).

Five Weeks That Changed The Pod. iPod mini? Fourth-generation iPod? Dead: replaced by smaller, lighter, and glossier models. And then there's ROKR.

If boldness alone was enough to secure the iPod's future, September and October 2005 would be forever remembered as the months when Apple Computer's bravado was enough to shock the world into submission. With competitors nipping at the heels of both the popular iPod and super-popular iPod mini, Apple staged two separate events to kill both products, then debut replacements with features that no one else was prepared to offer.

First on the chopping block was the iPod mini, touted for the first time on the day of its discontinuation as the most popular iPod model in history. Having served as Apple's first \$249 iPod in early 2004, it had remained appealing despite the 2005 release of the smaller, cheaper iPod shuffle. But Apple had something else in mind: iPod nano, a full-featured color

iPod even thinner than shuffle, with a footprint smaller than a business card, and one capacity comparable to iPod mini.

4GB (\$249) and 2GB (\$199) models were released with white or black casings, and black models shocked Apple by outselling white, 4GB models outselling 2GB models. With the exception of two issues - easily scratched glossy surfaces and a small number of cracked screens - nano was almost universally lauded as a dream iPod.

Not so with Motorola's ROKR E1, a hybrid of cell phone and iPod that stuttered on stage - to the apparent surprise of Apple's Steve Jobs - and tanked in stores. Despite a partnership with a top phone maker and many of the world's best wireless providers, Apple's lack of involvement in the phone's external and internal design stopped E1 from winning hearts and ears.

generation iPod. And soon.

The company also unveiled Front Row, a simplified way for iMac computers to play back movies, music, and photos - surely the start of bigger plans. Can Front Rowon-TV announcements be too far off? We hope not - the interface is great (right).

But on October 12, Apple had another

set of announcements to make: the color

fourth-generation iPod was out, and the

fifth-gen iPod - "with video as a bonus" -

was in. At \$299 (30GB) and \$399 (60GB)

to its predecessor as a music and photo

player, but boasted a bigger screen,

prices, the new iPod was virtually identical

thinner body, and video playback abilities.

Content? For now, five ABC and Disney TV

shows, music videos, and short film clips.

But no feature films? And only 2-3 hours

of video battery life? Now we need a sixth-

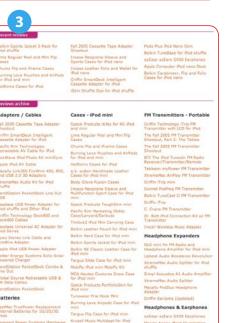


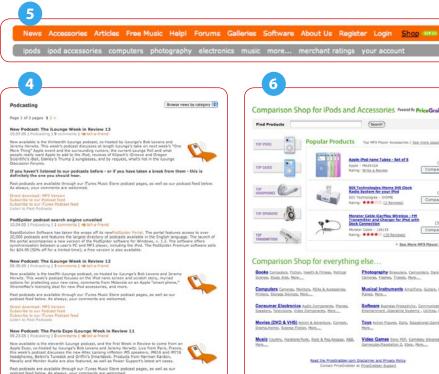
introduction

New at the Lounge. From comparison shopping and The iPod Directory to podcast pages and easier review pages, our efforts to expand iLounge's breadth of information continue, while ease-of-use remains key.









Even after listing nine big changes to iLounge in The Free iPod Book, we've still had time recently to make a few more tweaks to the site. Here are some you'll want to check out.

Every once in a while, we'll tweak the site's **Navigation Bar** (1) to add one-click links to new areas of the site. If you run the cursor over Accessories, you'll see a new addition to the gray bar underneath: **The iPod Directory** (2). This is an online version of the guide to iPod- and iTunes-related service providers and accessory vendors we premiered in our last Guide. While we'll publish the list in each of our Guides as an easy reference, this searchable and clickable version will be available on the site if you need it. We've also consolidated our **Reviews Page** (3) to make it easier to scroll through.

Weekly **Podcasts** (**4**) have become a major feature of the site, consistently ranking within the world's top 100 downloads through the iTunes Music Store. Since we now have enough of them to merit their own list, there's a full archive available on the site - with descriptions - if you go to News > Browse by Categories > Podcasting at the top of the page. As of this issue, we're up to 17 Week in Review podcasts on many great topics.

Trying to find the best deal on an iPod or iPod accessories? Our new **Shop button (5)** will lead you to a **Comparison Shopping Page (6)** where you can find both online deals and ratings for multiple merchants. Stick with the top-rated ones and you'll still save money over bricks-and-mortar retailers - sometimes 40% or more.



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novation, protection and accessories for mobile audio

Silicone Case for iPod nano

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Aluminum-Lined Leather Case for iPod nano



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FM Stereo Digital Transmitter Superior

sneak peeks

One of our favorite sections of every Buyers' Guide is this: our look at the smartest or best-looking iPod accessories we've recently seen. As always, we recommend that you wait for the official iLounge reviews: features may change.

Docking Accessories. By tossing out the extended headphone port found on iPods and iPod minis, Apple created a need for all-new bottom-mounting FM transmitters, remote controls, and other "docking" accessories. The first such add-ons are on their way to market - these are some of the most noteworthy.



Belkin **TuneSync for iPod**

Now that Apple's dropped the top accessory connector previously found on iPods and iPod minis, combinations of iPod docks with other accessories are about to become very common. Like its earlier iPod shuffle-ready USB hub, **Belkin's TuneSync** (\$65.99) is making the most of an iPod docking solution, combining a charging, audio, and syncing station with a 5-Port USB hub. Seven different dock adapters will come in the package, letting you place virtually every iPod save the shuffle up on top. And of course, you can always use one of those USB ports to dock the shuffle - maybe even at the same time.

Macally **FMCup**

Every car has a cup holder or ten, so what if you could mount, charge, and broadcast to your car's radio directly from one of them? Macally's FMCup (\$59.99) is the first iPod combination of cupholder mount with charging and FM transmitter, using Apple's new Dock Adapter inserts (plus three of its own) to mount any docking iPod in a car. A backlit LCD screen and buttons are there for FM tuning, while foam pads secure FMCup in your cup holder. Want to use it with iPod shuffle or other devices? There's a jack on the back for auxiliary input.

Griffin Technology iTrip for iPod nano

Only months after releasing an impressive new top-mounting FM transmitter for the iPod 4G, the discontinuation of the iPod's top accessory port forced **Griffin Technology** back to the drawing board to create iTrip for iPod nano (\$49.99). Like other nano accessories, it connects to the bottom, but rather than sticking straight down, it rides along nano's back, adding a bit of extra thickness. It's supposed to benefit from the superior broadcasting capabilities of the prior iTrip, but take advantage of the iPod's screen for tuning - without the use of any playlist of tuning files, like old iTrips. It even includes a mini-USB port for recharging.





Belkin **TuneBase FM nano** and **iPod** Griffin Technology **iTrip Auto**



The biggest competitors to TEN'S original Halfway between an iTrip and iPod mini version of the 3-in-1 mount, a TuneBase FM is **Griffin's** charger, and audio-out accessory flexDock (see below) have been **Belkin's** TuneBase and TuneBase FM for iPod mini. Now the FM transmitter designed solely for predecessors, and a full-sized iPod version that is larger, and includes interchangeable trays that render it compatible with most a separate cabled housing that Dock Connector-equipped iPods (5G, 4G, sits in your car, providing power mini, and nano). As with last year's TuneBase FM, there are four FM preset stations and any available radio station. Rather tuning buttons on each unit; channel surfing than using a top-mounting connector, is planned for the iPods' screens. TuneFM-style it uses the iPod's bottom. As with iTrip, audio improvements are promised, as well. Expect them in January for \$79.99 each.

upcoming iTrip Auto (\$59.99), a combination of iPod charger and company has revealed **TuneBase FM** vehicle use. If you only plan to conquer for iPod nano, which is smaller than its the radio waves when you're driving, iTrip Auto brings iTrip's simple but powerful channel-tuning functionality into while it broadcasts your music to you can switch between low-distortion mono and standard distortion stereo modes, plus toggle between US and international radio stations. It's planned for December release.

We loved **TEN's** combination car charger, mount, and line-quality audio output device flexDock for iPod mini, and have been waiting for its full-sized over. A new version, **flexDock for iPod** (price not yet confirmed), has been shown on the company's Belkin says will use each iPod's screen for web site, and appears to retain the same type of tuning, plus allow on-the-road charging with strong, flexible gooseneck mount found in the mini a mini USB port on the bottom. The 4 preset version, shortened to safely hold up the larger full-sized iPods. Why? Weight has previously been the sticking Belkin is also promising active noise filtering point that has prevented many accessory manufacturers to eliminate noise and static, improved from making the most of the otherwise great gooseneck stereo separation, and an improved concept. TEN hasn't announced a release date, but we'll dynamic range for better highs and deeper certainly be at the front of the line to check this one out bass. Like TuneBase FM, Belkin plans these whenever the company is ready to ship it. for a January release.

TEN Technology **flexDock** Belkin **TuneFM for nano** and **iPod**

Fourth-generation iPods just saw the release of Belkin's top-mounting FM transmitter TuneFM, previewed in our Free iPod Book. Now the 5G iPod successor for a year. The wait may soon be iPod and iPod nano are getting **new TuneFMs** (\$49.99), two bottom-mounting versions that buttons are obvious from the shots, but



all-in-one systems to emphasize high style over audio quality, and support Apple's new iPod Dock Adapter, the mysterious plastic insert that now ships with all iPods, guaranteeing a snug fit in compatible speakers.



Altec Lansing inMotion iM5 Speakers

Altec Lansing had exactly the right idea two years ago with its original inMotion speakers: deliver portable, iPod-matching speakers at a magic price point, and people will line up. They did, and now Altec is introducing inMotion iM5 (\$149.95), a visually refreshed portable system that's said to be acoustically virtually-identical to the original. iM5 sports a pop-out iPod dock, AA battery compartments, and simple carrying bag that make it a simple travel option, plus an AC adapter for home use.





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Kensington **SX 2000 Speakers**

As Bose's SoundDock proved last year, the stark look is in. **Kensington's SX 2000 Speakers** (\$159.99) take that concept to the next level, employing NXT SurfaceSound technology to create a perfectly flat front listening surface that's not only thin - 3.9" for the entire speaker chassis - but also project sound through the unit's back, as well. One other key to its appeal: an integrated iPod dock compatible with Apple's recently announced Dock Adapters, so it works with iPod nano, mini, and 3G, 4G, and 5G iPods.

XtremeMac MicroBlast

Like Altec Lansing's earlier iMmini speakers for the iPod mini, XtremeMac's MicroBlast (\$119.95) is a one-iPod design: tailored specifically to the thin iPod nano, it's a solid match on fit and looks, with interchangeable black and white frames in each box, plus a clear protective shell that doubles as a flat mount. Four speakers inside the one-inch chassis are said to be similar to Altec's popular iM3s in sound quality, and powered on either AA batteries or wall power. Like iMmini, which surprised us with nice sound balance, we're anxious to hear MicroBlast's audio for ourselves.



Macally IP-S111

Having already released two iterations of its highlyrated pocket-sized PodWave/IP-A111 speakers, Macally is now set to go with the new IP-S111 (\$39.99) in November:, a version made specifically to fit and mount an iPod shuffle. Relying on a single AA battery, IP-S111 sounds just like its predecessors, which is to say very good for the tiny size. One or two people can listen at once without significant distortion, which only starts in the bass when the volume is pumped up to the shuffle's max. We use our IP-A111 way, way more than you'd expect, so for shuffle owners, this could be a great option.

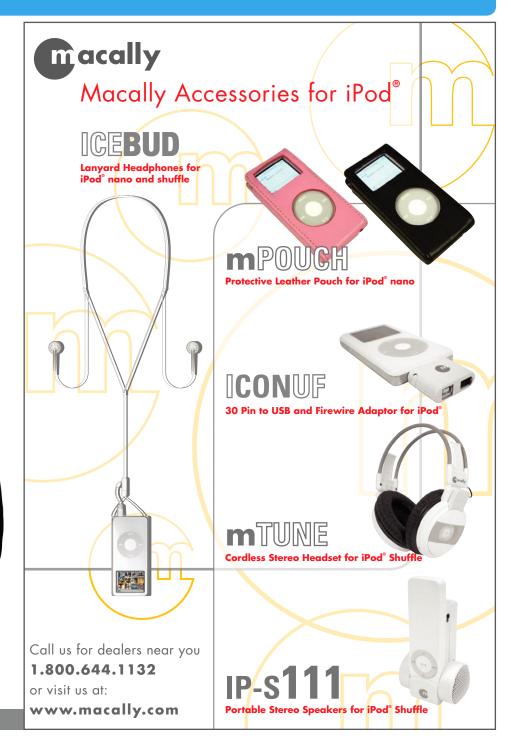


Having already released the premium three-piece iFi speaker system and one-piece stationary iGroove, **Klipsch** is planning an early 2006 test of the boom box market with iJam, a portable system with two huge 4.5"

woofers, coaxial tweeters, an FM

tuner and an iPod dock. As with other Klipsch speakers, bass will be a major selling point. While a wall adapter will be included, it won't be required - a first for a Klipsch system - batteries will be an option. You'll even get to choose from different colored finishes - blue and red versions are the only ones the company has shown, but it's considering seasonally appropriate options. Price? Currently unknown.



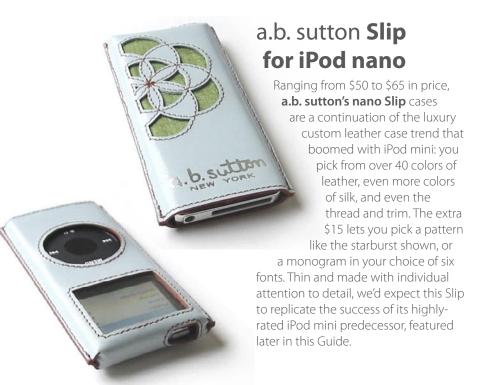


Slappa SlipScreen

Need an NBA-branded iPod case? Slappa

and **Gripper**

Cases and Exercise Gear. New iPods demand all-new cases. And old iPods demand new clothes to keep them looking fresh. Custom designs, licensed artwork, and better protection are all coming for the holidays.



Core Cases

Aluminum Case for nano

Received just before this Buyers' Guide went

out, Core Cases' new Aluminum Cases for

iPod nano (\$19.95) have all the good looks of

the excellent shuffle version (reviewed inside),

plus a screen protector and seven color options:

these plus green, pink, sky blue, midnight blue and

orange. A super-smart detachable belt clip's a bonus.







has you covered. A license from the NBA has yielded 15 new iPod mini SlipScreen plastic cases (\$19.99) for specific teams, and an All-Star 2006 version, too. We like that it includes full Click Wheel protection, and of course, there's a detachable belt clip. The company's also producing NBA logo cases for the iPod shuffle, called **Grippers**, and currently shown with seven different teams. More teams are coming soon for both iPods; pricing for Grippers hasn't been disclosed.

STM Nano Cocoon

STM's past Cocoons are iLounge favorites; the new Nano Cocoon (\$35) includes a silicone rubber case for when you don't need full protection, plus a hard outer shell that zips closed with a nano and your earbuds inside. (A mesh pocket holds your earbuds.) New for nano: thread a small headphone cord through a hole in the case's body, then seal the case shut, or open the two zippers enough for larger phones. A thin metal belt clip's on the rear if you need it.



Pacific Design **Nano Flip**

We were impressed by the look and pricing of **Pacific Design's** iPod mini cases - now it's back with even more stylish Nano Flip versions (\$29.99) in four color combinations (carbon black, precious pink, big sky blue, and rally red). Like the mini cases, they feature a soft snap on back instead of a belt clip, letting you attach to a bag strap or armband.



Incase Pouch 5G

What's the easiest way to get a case out for a brand-new iPod? Resize the old one. Incase's new Pouch for 5G iPods (\$19.95) follows in the same sleeve-like design we've come to expect from the company's early iPod offerings - this one's sized specifically for the thinner 30GB new iPod, and uses soft fabric on its sides and interior. Knowing Incase, the exciting 5G designs are just around the corner...

Sumo Cases **5G** and **nano Flip**, Stripe, and PlayThru

One of our favorite iPod case designers is doing even more to appeal to women: **Sumo Cases'** new lineup of affordable 5G and nano cases stars **nano Flip** (\$29.99, bottom left), nano Stripe (\$34.99, bottom right), the ballistic nylon and leather **5G PlayThru**

Horizontal (\$29.99, top right), and all-leather **5G** PlayThru Horizontal Stripe (\$39.99). Planned for Thanksgiving availability each case except Flip opens to reveal your iPod's screen and controls. We've loved the looks, prices, and materials of Sumo's cases; see our 4G PlayThru review later in this Guide for additional details.

XtremeMac SportWrap nano

Lots of new **XtremeMac** cases for iPod nano caught our attention, but SportWrap nano (\$29.95) was one of the most attractive. With a slick all-

black design that's thinner and better contoured than the company's earlier neoprene iPod mini cases, the new SportWrap uses two adjustable Velcro straps, promising that any arm will feel comfortable.

Speck SkinTight Armbands

One of the most prolific case makers these days is **Speck**, which has updated its classic **SkinTight Armbands** (\$29.95-\$34.95) for both the new 5G iPod and iPod nano. There are actually two nano versions - one with an included SkinTight soft plastic case (\$29.95), and one without (\$34.95) - and only one 5G iPod version (\$34.95), with the case. We've really liked almost all of the company's prior armbands, and these look even nicer: the nano version is two-toned. We can't wait to try them.



Marware **CEO Billfold** and Card Wallets

Of the ten new iPod nano cases unveiled by

Marware, the two that most intrigued us were new designs: the CEO Billfold Wallet (\$34.95) and CEO Card Wallet (\$24.95), both of which combine smart leather styling with iPod nano holsters. Card Wallet is only large enough to hold your nano and some business cards, while Billfold Wallet holds the nano and credit cards, change, and cash - a more substantial collection of items than any of the other walletstyle designs we've seen specifically for the nano.





Devoted1 **iBelieve**

The ultimate sign of religious devotion? A handy add-on for God-fearing men and women who just happen to want to wear an iPod and crucifix at the same time? Something else? You decide. Devoted1.com's

iBelieve (\$12.95) is a real shuffle lanyard. Praise be.

Contour Design **Showcase Sport**

Contour Design's original Showcase remains one of the best hard cases for the 4G iPod; now the company has come up with **Showcase Sport** (\$32.95), a tweaked

system, sleeker edges, and smoother antishock rubber. Thankfully. the company has preserved its smart detachable belt clip system, which is still one of our favorites.



Proporta **Aluminum-Lined Leather Case for nano**

Sturdier inside than the average leather case, Proporta's Alu-Leather Case (\$34.95) drops a hard aluminum plate into its front flap - a good way to keep nano from snapping in your pocket. If only its sides weren't so open...



iSkin **Duo for iPod nano**

f we'd received iSkin's just-released Duo for iPod nano (\$29.95) earlier, it would have been our iPod nano Case of the Year. Two layers of different colored silicone plus clear screen and wheel protectors

cover every iota of your nano except its hold switch, and there's a pop-off belt clip, toomany design touches missing from the commodity-class silicone nano cases we're seeing. The matching Cerulean-branded earbuds are separate, but sell for \$14.99 a pair with Duo.



*No purchase necessary. Void where prohibited. Please visit our Web site at www.xtrememac.com/ilounge for complete rules and details.

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sneak peeks



Tunewear **TuneWallet & Icewear**

We were legitimately impressed by **Tunewear's** iPod nano version of the **TuneWallet** (\$39.95), and now the company has provided its first shots of the larger, multi-pocket 5G iPod version, as well as its silicone rubber **IceWear** (\$24.95), which has varied considerably in ratings between versions. Planned for November release, they'll be amongst 5G's first.



Vaja **iVod for iPod nano**

The premium iPod nano case everyone's been waiting for is Vaja's i-Volution (iVod) for iPod nano (\$49.95). As with its predecessors, a padded leather body in your choice of colors and leather grades, integrated clear hard screen protection, and an optional Click Wheel guard are all there.

Last-Minute Addition: ProClip Padded Holder for iPod nano

Okay, okay, it's not a case, but we needed to find a way to squeeze in the first photo of this new car accessory. The 2005 Car Accessory of the Year is a more deluxe version of what you see here: **ProClip's Padded Holder with Tilt Swivel for iPod nano** (\$34.99) provides a soft, sturdy way to mount your nano in a car for easy viewing. A ball joint on back - tightened with a screw into your preferred position - lets you pick the ideal nano viewing angle and orientation. Combined with a second, vehicle-specific piece, there's zero doubt you'll get a perfect fit for both iPod and car. What's missing? A way to insert your nano while inside a case, the key feature of ProClip's top holder.



Power Support Silicone Jacket for iPod nano

Just before the issue closed, we received samples of **Power Support's Silicone Jacket** for iPod nano (\$24.99), which is based substantially upon last year's iPod mini Case of the Year. The hidden highlight is surgicalgrade Japanese silicone rubber, which is better than what's found in 90% of the silicone cases we see. With either of the two color choices (translucent or black), you'll get a detachable plastic belt clip, plus the company's excellent clear screen protector and 3D Wheel Film - excellent adhesive covers that collectively leave only the bottom and a thin stripe for your Hold switch exposed. It's planned for imminent release, as are a clear hard nano case and protective film covers for the new 5G iPod.



Bling. Rap mogul Diddy (then P. Diddy) blazed a trail last year with his \$16,000 diamond-encrusted HP iPod and matching Altec Lansing inMotion speakers. Now accessory makers are finding all sorts of ways to trick out even low-end Pods with stones and limited-run designs, *sometimes* at prices that mere mortals can afford.

Vaja **iVod Crystal**

Seeing the Swarovski crystal-laden **iVod Crystal** (\$340) in pictures is impressive enough, but receiving one? Prepare to be stunned. Available in six colors of Vaja's top-quality Vitelino leather, the padded leather case actually comes with its own leather carrying bag for protection - a nice one - and preserves all of the excellent features of the top-rated and more affordable standard iVod. Belt clip? No - this comes with a nice detachable hand strap, a far better option. And for an extra \$10, you can have a name etched into the back. Go ahead, live a little.

XtremeMac VMA 2005 shuffle Case

Good luck finding one of these; they were in celebrity gift bags at MTV's 2005 Video Music Awards. Based upon XtremeMac's Shieldz. the limited edition VMA 2005 iPod shuffle **Case** was presented with an otherwise uncustomized iPod shuffle to key attendees. Value? We've never seen one offered for sale, but there aren't many of them to go around.



What Started This?



Leave it to Diddy to start a trend: for the 2004 debut of HP's short-lived iPod, he showed up with this little number, black coated on the back, labeled with his Sean John clothes logo, and encrusted with 120 diamonds in the shape of an HP logo. A matching pair of Altec Lansing inMotion speakers was also shown, sparking blingy add-ons.



ColorWare **Branded iPods**

Anyone can buy an iPod or a case, but corporate branded paint jobs? **ColorWare's** web site now features custom iPods designed for BMW, Mercedes-Benz, LeBron James, Monster and Target, amongst others, running the gamut from

simple black paint and iconography to metallics, intricate art and special rear engravings. Is this the ultimate gift from a corporation? And can we make one ourselves that's this cool?











1FM Radio, Remote, for iPod \$49.99



- Digital auto station scan with wraparound
- 6 station presets per ban
- Handy equalization toggle, available in Remote Mode.



SmartDeck Intelligent Cassette Adapter for iPod



- Control iPod navigation through your car stereo • Intelligent level control for optimal input levels
- Constructed of the highest quality components
- Seamless integration between iPod and car stereo



AirClick RF Remote Control for iPod



- Compatible with the new iPod with Video as well as older 4th Generation iPod and iPod photo
- **CONNECTOR** Attaches directly to bottom of iPod using Dock Connector



FM Transmitter with Dock Connector for iPod | \$49.99



- Compatible with iPod nano & 5th generation iPod
- Attaches directly to bottom of iPod using Dock Connector
- Easy to read backlit LCD screen makes setting its digital tuner easy and intuitive



PowerBlock AC Power Adapter for iPod



- Compatible with iPod nano & 5th generation iPod
- Plugs into any wall outlet



PowerJolt Auto Charger for iPod



- Compatible with iPod nano & 5th generation iPod
- Includes charger module and a separate 4 foot, high quality Dock Connector to USB Cable.



\$24.99

RoadTrip FM Transmitter, Charger, and Cradle for iPod \$89.99

- Avaiable in white and charcoal
- Compatible with iPod nano & 5th generation iPod
- Transmitter can then be set to broadcast iPod's music to any FM frequency from 88.1 to 107.9.



FM Transmitter for iPod & iPod mini



- Uses any frequency from 88.1 to 107.9
- Select frequency using the iPod's interface
- Powered from the iPod needs no batteries
- Works with iPod Photo, iPod mini, 3rd & 4th gen iPods





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Secure your 5th Generation iPod w/ Video in this beautiful leather case. A stylish and practical method to preventing scratches and dirt from getting on your iPod. Comes with a detachable wrist strap for ease in carrying. In-stock and ready to ship.

Xclusive Store for iPod Player & Accessories

The widest range of accessories for iPod 3G, 4G, iPod mini, iPod nano, iPod shuffle, ROKR iTunes Phone and iPod 5G (video) 30GB & 60GB



iLounge Holiday Buyers' Guide sneak peeks

Headphones. We see tons of new headphones every month, but few of them - for better or worse - are made specifically for one iPod. Brilliant or freaky, the options below are what's coming for nano and shuffle.



At least as far as the iPod nano's concerned, Apple did this idea first with its expensive iPod nano Lanyard Headphones - now **Griffin's** going to try its luck with **TuneBuds for iPod nano** (\$29.99), which combine a slightly different metal nano holder with a set of white and gray earbuds and a white fabric lanyard. We've been playing with a finished version of the all-plastic **TuneBuds for iPod shuffle**, and think they're a superior-looking alternative to the other shuffle lanyard headphones we've previously tested. Hopefully the nano version will be equally impressive.



Macally **mTune-n for iPod nano**

It's an established fact that the iPod shuffle is small. Small enough, in fact, to fit inside of a pair of headphones - assuming they're the right headphones. That's the concept behind **Macally's** mTune for iPod shuffle, which we've shown on the site in a recent First Looks. Now the company has unveiled **mTune-n** (\$49.99), a version designed for the larger iPod nano, which we're not so sure is as good a fit for the concept. As with mTune, Macally has integrated an iPod directly into the headphones: just pop nano rightside up into the left earcup, press play, and listen to your music: no wires, no batteries, nothing. If you want to use the headphones with other devices, a standard stereo minijack cable is included. Portability? They fold up, earcups inside the soft plastic top tubing, for easy carrying. Macally plans mTune-n for release before the year's end, and if they're like the shuffle version we've been testing, you'll find them comfortable - though depending on your friends, perhaps just a bit of a fashion risk.

Re-introducing the iPod.

If you thought you knew your iPods, think again. In 2005, Apple tossed out all the iPods we recognized, then replaced them with newer, sleeker, and more powerful models. Which one's right for you? And what's been lost? Our comprehensive guide to iPod hardware looks at every current and past model.

If you wondered why we didn't call our most recent publication a Buyers' Guide, the pages that follow explain our rationale: in the last two months, Apple discontinued the two most popular iPod models we've reviewed, and replaced them with smaller, more powerful models. Now the iPod family consists of the iPod shuffle (\$99-129), iPod nano (\$199-249), and iPod (with video) (\$299-399). In one sentence, here's the summary: shuffle's only for music and data, nano's for music, data, and photos, and the full-sized iPod's for music, data, photos, and videos.

But that only tells part of the story. The cheapest, screenless iPod shuffle holds 1/4 the music of even the smallest iPod nano, while the cheapest iPod nano holds 1/15 the music of the smallest full-sized iPod. Yet in each case, \$100 separates the devices in price. In our view, you get a much better iPod for \$299 than you do for \$99 or \$199 - the only other tradeoff is in size. An iPod shuffle's the size of a pack of gum, while a full-sized iPod's the size of a deck of cards. The card-sized iPod nano offers a pricey but eye-catching compromise.

The other big change in today's iPods is their accessories. Gone are the days when iPods came with two types of cables, two ways to recharge their batteries, and other goodies. Now each iPod comes with one way to charge and transfer files: a USB plug, which is built into the shuffle, and included on cables for the other iPods. You still get one pair of white iPod earbuds, two sets of black foam covers, and a copy of iTunes. New iPods even include inserts to insure their compatibility with Apple's Universal Dock, and sometimes cases.

On the next pages, we look at and compare each current iPod (and an iTunes phone) then step back through iPod and iTunes history.



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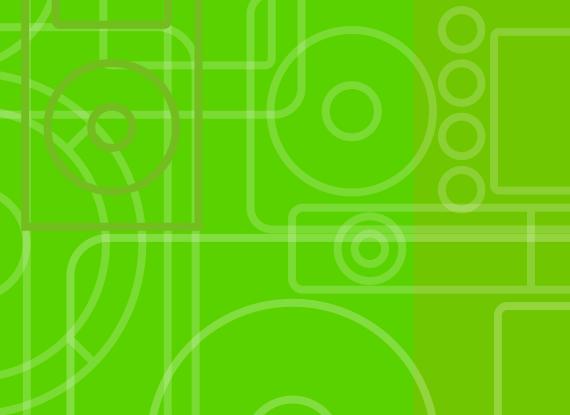
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A Brief History of iPod + iTunes





The new iPod: Music. Photos. Video.



Bigger screens. Thinner bodies. Same prices. When Apple promised "one more thing" before the holidays, video was a natural. But it's not as big a deal as you'd expect. Thankfully, the iPod's music still shines.

If you're willing to believe that the future of the iPod is "all about the music," or if you're a first-time buyer and looking for Apple's best-ever iPod on value, you'll no doubt be thrilled with the **fifth-generation iPod** (30GB/60GB). In almost every way, it betters the 20GB and 60GB fourth-generation color iPod recently sold at the same prices, and as Apple CEO Steve Jobs puts it, now "you get video as a bonus." Great, right?

Mostly. Thanks to tweaks to the audio, there's no doubt that this is the best-sounding iPod yet, a device that for the first time fares as well with bass and piano solos as any other sounds you might toss at it. And a bigger 2.5" screen - note we don't say "big" - renders album artwork and photographs at greater sizes and levels of detail than before. Best of all, both of the new iPods are lighter and thinner, thereby easier to pocket and take wherever you go. The only thing most prior iPodders will miss is the old top-mounting accessory port, which has been completely eliminated in favor of all bottom-mounting accessories - a bad but irreversible move that obsoletes old remotes and most FM transmitters. Mac owners may miss FireWire support, too.

But as a video player, the new iPod is less than "insanely great" (see next page), and Apple knows it. Backing away from earlier comments about the quality of small-screen video, CEO Steve Jobs shrewdly touted the new iPod largely as a way to get video players into millions of hands before competitors could do so. Perfection apparently wasn't the goal: the iPod doesn't even include a video encoder, and the only supported one is QuickTime 7 Pro (\$29.99); you'll have to hunt for others. DVD ripping? Good luck. There are ways to create iPod-ready videos, but they're time-consuming.

Amazingly, the strategy may work anyway. Today's competitors suffer from equally significant hardware and software limitations. Then there's content: only Apple has legal TV show downloads available. And which one are you going to carry everywhere?

There's no getting around the fact that the new iPod isn't the near-perfect solution we would have anticipated from Apple - we expect that one next year. Until then, video's just a bonus, and not a bad one, so buy this iPod mostly for its audio acumen.

What's Changed?

Body colors. Apple now sells full-sized iPods with white/matte gray or black/matte black front plates. Both iPods' backs remain mirror-polished metal.

The screen. Jumping from 2 inches and 220x176 pixels to 2.5 inches and 320x240 pixels, the new screen is as bright and colorful as before, but looks wider because of all of the white space in menus. Detail is considerably better.

Click Wheel. The new Click Wheel is smaller than the prior iPod's - about iPod mini-sized (1.5"), and still usable.

Thickness. The new 30GB iPod is only 11 millimeters thick - noticeably thinner than the prior-generation color 20GB iPod. Even the 14-millimeter 60GB iPod is thinner than the old color 20GB model. And surprisingly lighter.

Battery life. In a first for full-sized iPods, your run time varies based on the iPod's size. A thin 30GB plays music for 15.5 hours, video for over 2 on its screen The big 60GB model plays music for about 20 hours, video for 3.5.

Pack-ins. At the dawn of the fourthgeneration, iPods included USB and FireWire cables, plus a wall charger. Now you get only USB - no charger, and FireWire isn't supported for data syncing with your computer. But you do get a neoprene anti-scratch case.

Video Playback



There's good and bad news about the new iPod's video playback. Because of the screen's quality, it is capable of doing a convincing job of displaying what appears to be TV-quality video, with all of the fluidity of motion and crispness of detail you'd expect from a standard television set. But because of two other factors, it falls short: the 2.5" size isn't squint-inducing, but it's close, and the quality of encoded video varies. TV shows



downloaded from Apple's iTunes Music Store look consistently good on the iPod's screen, while music videos and video podcasts are less so, ranging from pixelated to clean. Watching iPod output to a TV or iTunes playback on your monitor isn't great, though: you'll have to settle for less-than-broadcast-quality video, at least until Apple ups the Store's standards, and perhaps the next iPod's technology, as well. It's convenient, just not ideal.

Music, too

The new iPod sounds even better than last year's, thanks to audio chip and other improvements. But its menus for music are virtually the same. Now you can play the audio portion of videos, but otherwise, you just have more space on screen for text and album art.

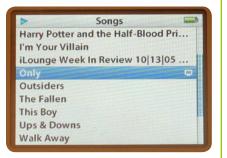






Photo Slideshows

Only three major changes have been made to the iPod's photo capability since last year's iPod photo was released: now you can view 30 thumbnail images on screen at a time, use 11 different transition effects (including some cool 3-D effects taken from Apple's iPhoto program for the Mac), and see even larger, more detailed pictures, thanks to the new iPod's bigger screen. Output to a TV is still possible, unlike iPod nano.





iPod nano: Fit 4GB in your wallet.





A wallet-sized music and photo player? Believe it. Your MasterCard's footprint is bigger than nano, which is also available in two high-gloss colors.

Everyone knew that Apple was preparing a successor to the iPod mini, but no one was ready for the September 2005 introduction of **iPod nano** (\$199-249). Thinner than even the iPod shuffle, nano packs 2GB or 4GB of flash memory (read: unlike mini's hard disk, no moving parts) and a color screen, yet weighs only half what mini did. Fifteen hours of tested music playback time - up slightly over Apple's 14-hour estimate - plus a clean color interface and photo slideshow abilities make this iPod virtually equivalent to last year's iPod photo in every way save storage capacity. There are other differences, but not ones you'll mind.

Perhaps nano's biggest surprise was its second color - Apple flippantly noted that it had decided to try a black version, which stunned the company by outselling white by a 4:1 margin. Black's only downside: it shows more scratches than white (see sidebar). Both units feature the polished metal rear of full-sized iPods.

All things considered, is nano worth your cash? In our view, it's a better second iPod than a first. Limited in capacity and priced at a high dollar-to-Gigabyte premium, nano will only fully satisfy the needs of people who want to carry 50 or 100 CDs of music at a time, and don't mind missing out on the 5G iPod's video. Like iPod mini, it could stand to be \$50 cheaper and available in a larger capacity. We think it will be. But if size and a slightly lower price than the 30GB iPod are important to you, you'll be blown away by Apple's design acumen.

Especially if you work out. Properly encased, nano is unparalleled. Accessories already released allow you to wear nano on your neck, arm, or belt, and there's no question that its light weight will feel trivial no matter where you plan to run or what you want to lift. We're partial to carrying it in wallets or on keychains. And never would have imagined it.

A Tiny Weakness

Every iPod since 2001 has been scratchable, hence the popularity and robust assortment of cases. But despite Apple comments to the contrary, no iPod has shown scratches like nano, especially the black version. Consider a case absolutely mandatory, and see our reviews for top picks.

New Clocks & Locks



iPod mini held no secrets: it was an iPod-minus. But nano actually innovated several features that later appeared on the 5G iPod: a stopwatch with lap timer, multiple configurable world clocks, and a screen lock that prevents unauthorized access. Forgot the code? Just connect to a computer and it'll unlock. The best feature: lyric display. Add lyrics to iTunes and sing along with any song on nano or 5G.

iPod shuffle: Music. Data. Next?

Shuffle Now or Later?

Amazing as it sounds, the iPod shuffle is now the oldest iPod on the market, and Apple's known for rapid updates to the family. So is now the right time to buy a shuffle? Here are a few things you might want to consider.

Who's the recipient? If you're going to give an iPod as a gift, especially to someone very young or very old, shuffle is inexpensive, very easy to use, and comparatively disposable. Because it lacks the screen and thick clear plastic coating of other iPods, the owner might not mind if it's scratched or dropped. But it also holds very little music, so it's not the right gift for a serious listener - unless they already have another iPod.

How much song choice does the owner want? Today's shuffle offers only two ways to play back music: in order from a list you create, or in totally random order. If you need to quickly locate one song from the shuffle's 120 or 240 choices, you'll need to do a lot of skipping forward or backward.

What's going to replace it? Apple has two options: a successor with a small screen, or kill it and create cheaper nanos. Regardless, expect low storage capacities and prices, and if not nano, don't expect album art or photo features: the small iPod will likely remain for music and data, only.





Low prices = low expectations. The shuffle's two ports - one for data, one for earphones - tell its entire simple story. Store your files, or press play and listen.

Though it's not our favorite iPod, there's no denying that the January 2005 release of **iPod shuffle** (\$99-129) has met a need: Apple created a super-simple iPod that anyone could afford. But in so doing, the company redefined the meaning of the word "iPod:" rather than guaranteeing that you'd carry your entire music collection at all times, Apple said iPods could be used to carry as little as you needed, suggesting you'd find shuffle easy to access and pleasant to look at. To underscore that last point, and unlike its predecessors, it included a necklace; it was the first iPod light enough to effortlessly wear, and companies have exploited that well.

Though threadbare on features, shuffle was a breakthrough: for the first time in Apple history, its prices actually undercut all competitors at 512MB or 1GB capacities, and it included a built-in USB port. It is a wearable music player and no-

cables-attached disk drive in one, proving especially appealing to younger buyers, and people who wanted second, less fragile iPods. With only five buttons on front (volume, play/pause, and track forward/back), plus a battery light and three-position power switch on the rear, shuffle is nearly as simple to use as possible, no matter how you want to use it.

Apple's gamble on simple elegance and low pricing paid off. This iPod broke through to mass-market retailers like never before, yet also found its way into celebrities' bags at events such as the MTV Video Music Awards. And it ignited talk that Apple would eventually find ways to fit music into anything small - bugs, teeth, and so on. Even if it isn't that exciting from a technology standpoint, shuffle's still the lightest, cheapest iPod available today. But we're continuing to hope for even better in 2006.

ROKR E1: Hang up, try again.







A smart iPod phone could be a huge hit. But this isn't it. By retrofitting an old E398 phone (left) with iTunes, Motorola made ROKR E1 an instant B-Side.

Depending on your perspective, **Motorola's ROKR E1 Phone** (\$349 off contract, less on contract) was either a sure-fire hit or a sure-fire disaster in the making. How could a phone with an iPod inside go wrong? Answer: lots of ways. It wasn't too hard to add one new piece of software (the "iTunes Client") and one new button ("iTunes") to its existing E398 phone, but rather than thoroughly test the new features and properly integrate them, Motorola released the phone with some odd quirks.

Though E1 includes a 512MB memory card, an artificial 100-song cap is applied, card swapping is discouraged, and transfers to the device are painfully slow. The built-in speakers flip-flop, outputting left sounds from the right and vice-versa, and an auto pause/play feature to interrupt music with calls doesn't work quite right, a fact that created an awkward fumbling moment during Apple's introduction of the device. Most damningly, call quality is spotty - terrible with the

included earbuds and problematic with common Bluetooth headsets, fine only when holding the phone up to ear. It isn't an Apple-like experience, and consumers have passed. Today, it's reportedly one of Motorola's most oft-returned phones.

But the story wasn't entirely bad. While much slower on E1, the integrated iTunes Client software generally mimicked the audio functionality of the simultaneously released iPod nano, permitting full access to one's iTunes playlists, songs, and podcasts. And like the iPod shuffle, the audio quality - other than the speaker issue - is solid.

Faint praise? Yes. ROKR E1 is clearly one to skip. The next iTunes-ready phones will improve upon these mild successes, and according to Motorola, they're coming soon - both from itself and from Apple. If you've been waiting for an iTunes phone, you've been on hold this long; what's a few more months?

Superior Silhouettes



It's almost as hard to market a new device as it is to create it, but U.S.exclusive ROKR E1 carrier Cingular Wireless hit precisely the right notes with a series of three TV commercials. Each showed a girl or boy walking normally with ROKR in hand while a mirror image or silhouette danced wildly to the song playing through the headphones. A call came through and the dancing stopped, only to resume when the call ended. After endless iterations, we'd tired of Apple's silhouette ads, but these new takes worked perfectly to introduce ROKR to the world - one of the three commercials was even in Spanish. If only the phone had been better...









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Just married.

Vaja i-volution and iPod nano. Made one for each other.

Pod-by-Pod: Comparisons & Specs.

Top

Today's iPods differ a lot up top: fullsized ones have a headphone port and Hold switch, nano only the Hold switch. and shuffle only the headphone port. Notice how thin nano is by comparison with the top of a 30GB black iPod.

Podcasts

Shuffle Songs

Now Playing

Body

iPod and nano both come in glossy white or black front shells,

which unfortunately show scratches more easily than their

Screen

The full-sized iPod has a 2.5-inch, 320x240 pixel, 65,536-color whitelit display, and nano has a 1.5-inch, 176x132 pixel white/blue-lit display. Both can show photos, album artwork, and simple color games, but only the full-sized iPod can display videos.

Click Wheel Controls

Five buttons and a flat, touch-sensitive scrolling surface control both iPods. Menu brings you back to a menu, while the center Action button selects what's highlighted. Forward, reverse, and play/ pause are push-buttons, while volume and scrolling are controlled by brushing your finger over the flat wheel.

Bottom

Power chargers, speakers, and other accessories connect to this bottom port, identical on both iPods with screens, iPod nano also has a headphone port on bottom.

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iPod (with Video)

iPod nano

iPod shuffle





Body

Shuffle's all white plastic save the USB plug, lanyard, and gray Control Pad.

Control Pad

Simplified controls include five buttons on front for volume up and down, track forward and backward, and play/pause. A power switch is on back, and toggles between ordered and randomized playback. Power is indicated with a light on the back: play and data status with two lights hidden above the Pad.

USB Plug

Caps

Two USB caps are included with every shuffle: one for your pocket, another with an integrated lanyard necklace. They lock into place with ball bearings, and won't fall off unless tugged a lot. Accessory makers have made numerous alternate caps for the shuffle, but few of them use the sturdy Apple-quality ball bearing locking mechanism.

Unlike the Dock Connector, the USB plug doesn't need a cable to connect to any computer, and recharges there.

Which iPod's Right For Me? Virtually tied in our ratings, all three iPod models have unique appeal. Full-sized iPods win on value, but photo-ready nanos and music-only shuffles trade on size and lower prices, instead.

Skip the numbers: make it really easy

for me to

decide!

iPod shuffles are good second iPods or starter iPods.

Designed to play your top songs, either in an order you specify or at random, and to easily store data, they're not right for all situations, such as finding songs quickly. You'll want another iPod if you get one.

iPod nanos may be enough to satisfy all your needs - or not. Equipped with a great little screen,

the 4GB nano has just enough room for the average CD collection (80-100), while the 2GB'er is a super iPod shuffle. If vou're a serious music lover, you'll want much more space.

The 5G iPod's a top pick on all but size. For only \$50 more than the 4GB nano, you get 26GB of extra storage space, plus superior photo and video features. The 60GB version has even more space and battery life with only a little extra

thickness. Video's a decent bonus.

Summary: If you need a tiny, almost disposable music player, pick shuffle; nano's more fragile but with more space and a nice screen; larger 5G has the most features, and represents the best value.

	iPod shuffle 512MB	iPod shuffle 1GB	iPod nano 2GB	iPod nano 4GB	iPod 5G 30GB	iPod 5G 60GB		
Number of Songs	120	240	500	1000	7500	15000		
Music Battery Life	12-18 hours		14-15 hours		14-15 h.	19-20h.		
Size & Weight	3.3" x 0.98" x 0.33" 0.78 oz.		3.5" x 1.6" x 0.27" 1.5 oz.			4.1" x 2.4" x 0.55", 5.5oz.		
Screen	None		176x132 pixels, Color 1.5"		320x240 pixels, Color 2.5"			
Body Colors & Materials	1 (White) All Plastic		2 (White or Black) Plastic + Metal		2 (White or Black) Plastic + Metal			
Key Pack-In	Lanyard		None		Neoprene Case			
Music	Yes		Yes		Yes			
Data	Yes		Yes		Yes			
Photos	No		Yes - 4 hours with music		Yes - 3h	Yes - 4h		
Video	No		No		Yes - 2h	Yes - 3h		
iPod Accessories	1	No	Bottom-Mo	unting Only	Bottom-Mounting Only		Bottom-Mounting Only	
Price	US\$99	US\$129	US\$199	US\$249	US\$299	US\$399		
iLounge Ratings	New Users: A -Power Users: B		New Users: A- Power Users: B+		New Users: A- Power Users: B+			

Amazingly cool, but not right for me. Shuffle? No thanks." Larry Angell, Senior Editor: "The nano has eclipsed all other iPods in my eyes - it deserves every last drop of praise it gets. You can keep your video playback. The nano is the closest

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predecessors. A mirror-polished metal back is on each iPod and nothing but the music I really love!" nano, as well. People buy cases for their iPods to keep them shiny.

The Ghosts of iPod Past... And Future?



Remember these guys? Each lauded as "the best iPod ever," five full-sized models have been retired since 2001. But they're not necessarily extinct: early design touches have later reappeared in "new" iPods.

As of October 2005, Apple has released six different products with the same "iPod" name, white and chrome body styling, and a circular wheel-style control under a horizontal screen. But from generation to generation, the iPods have differed.

Announced in October 2001 and released in November, the first-generation iPod (1) was sold only for Mac users and had an exposed FireWire port on its top next to a central headphone port and a Hold switch. The center wheel physically moved, and its five buttons were separate from the wheel's surface; it had a flat, clear face. It was sold for \$399 in a five-Gigabyte capacity with white earbuds, a cable and wall charger.

Months later, Apple released the second-generation iPod (2), which introduced a flip-open FireWire port and a touch-sensitive, non-moving wheel. A \$499 10GB model came first, later dropping to \$399 when Apple released a \$499 20GB model and offered PC-ready versions. These iPods won about 1,000,000 fans - not more.

In 2003, the third iPod (3) was a breakthrough. Slimmer and with sleeker, polished front edges, its buttons were moved above its center wheel and turned into glowing, touch-sensitive surfaces. A new bottom-mounted Dock Connector replaced the FireWire port, and enabled this iPod to work with both USB and FireWire cables - a key selling point for PC owners. Apple boosted 3G's top capacity to 30GB, then 40GB before discontinuing it in 2004. This iPod unquestionably sparked today's revolution.

Summer 2004 saw the release of the fourth-generation iPod (4), which was the first full-sized iPod to use the Click Wheel - a single touch-sensitive surface with buttons neatly hidden underneath, introduced in the iPod mini. The return to a single wheel recalled the first- and second-gen iPods. Apple switched to a blue-backlit screen to cut costs, bringing the 20GB iPod to an affordable \$299, and seeing 40GB fall to \$399.

In October 2004, the company released what was then called "iPod Photo" (5), a colorscreened version of the 4G iPod available in 40GB (\$499) and 60GB (\$599) capacities. Prices rapidly fell, and Apple phased out the black-and-white model entirely in June 2005, releasing color 20GB (\$299) and 60GB (\$399) versions before their October demise. Apple dropped the capital P on "Photo," then the word photo altogether, briefly calling it a new iPod. The 5G iPod brought back the original iPod's flat corners.

Is iPod mini Gone Forever? Maybe.





It was the iPod that broke the critics' backs. Apple's first attempt to shrink the iPod proved more successful than anyone had expected. U.S. sell-outs continued for months, and overseas sales were delayed.

sized iPod mini (above, left) in January, 2004: the different colors are ingenious, said critics - including us - but the \$249 price is \$50 too high for a 4GB music player. Some predicted a \$50 price drop within mere months. No, said Apple, pointing to research that suggested that 4GB was just the right size for the average person's music library. The company also felt that the price, lower at the time than any other iPod, would still win plenty of attention.

Did it ever. Apple - notoriously incapable of meeting demand for even its expensive computer products - faced such profound shortages in the United States that it couldn't offer mini for overseas sale until late July, 2004. A lack of miniature hard drives was blamed, and eventually solved, just in time to satisfy holiday 2004 demand. Plus, the company's color choices proved wise: of the five aluminum body colors, only gold proved unpopular - silver became the unisex color of choice, while pink and green models were snapped up by women, blue by men - which the company appeared generally to have anticipated with supply. And despite critics' suggestions that a price drop to \$199 would be imminent, Apple could afford to take its time. At least, sort of.

It's easy to remember the prevailing mood when Apple introduced the first cell phone- By February 2005, many iPod mini wannabes had emerged: competitors had secured the miniature hard disks, and were starting to offer them at comparable prices, plus in different capacities. Apple's response was less than radical: a year after mini's introduction, it dropped the 4GB model's price to \$199, added a 6GB model at \$249, more than doubled their battery life, and tweaked their colors (above, right). Gold disappeared, while blue, green, and pink became brighter than before.

> Apple divulged the extent of mini's success only upon its discontinuation in September, 2005: despite critical complaints about value, the two versions had been the best sellers in the family's 20-million-plus run. They'd won over female and younger customers, and appealed tremendously to athletes - as much because of their small size and color options as their resilient aluminum bodies. Though mini never matched the high-style class of the white and chrome iPod, its strength was sorely missed the moment new nano owners discovered their first scratches.

Is a comeback possible? More than anything, we miss mini's color options, and appreciate the choice between different body materials. Does Apple?

Thinking of selling your iPod? After the nano and 5G iPod appeared, prices for older iPods dropped faster than we can recall - except for the very first iPod, which actually increased in value. Collectible? Maybe.

Person-to-Person eBay Sales

The Stats: Which iPods took the biggest hit? Third-generation iPods hit the skids, with typical drops of 30% or more since the publication of The Free iPod Book only three months ago. Fourth-generation iPods fell too, none harder than the color 20GB. iPod minis have held value quite well, and the original 5GB iPod actually jumped 27%. The 512MB shuffle held its value, but the 1GB version has fallen by over 10%. iPod nanos entered the charts at \$20-\$35 losses off of their retail prices, with white trailing black in value.

Capacity	Model Number	Average Price	Capacity	Model Number	Average Price	Capacity	Model Number	Average Price
1G - Mechai	nical Scroll Wheel		4G - Click Wheel & 2005 Color-Screened iPods			2G mini - Brighter Colors, Capacity on Back		
5GB	M8513LL/A		20GB	M9282LL/A	\$169.50	4GB, silver	M9800LL/A	\$157.81
	M8541LL/A		20GB U2	M9787LL/A	\$184.03	4GB, blue	M9802LL/A	\$149.88
	M8697LL/A	\$119.00	40GB	M9268LL/A	\$217.51	4GB, pink	M9804LL/A	\$157.35
10GB	M8709LL/A	\$88.83	20GB (Color)	MA079LL/A	\$197.02	4GB, green	M9806LL/A	\$152.50
ac Tauch (Samaitina Canall Wha	اما	20GB U2 (Color)	MA127LL/A	\$237.33	6GB, silver	M9801LL/A	\$185.33
	Sensitive Scroll Whe	ei	60GB (Color)	M9830LL/A	\$318.26	6GB, blue	M9803LL/A	\$189.25
10GB	M8737LL/A		Dhata Fark C	alan Canaan ad iD		6GB, pink	M9805LL/A	\$199.00
	M8740LL/A	\$128.09	•	olor-Screened iPo		6GB, green	M9807LL/A	\$182.50
20GB	M8738LL/A		30GB	M9829LL/A	\$212.93	مام، بدارا م		
	M8741LL/A	\$144.63	40GB	M9585LL/A	\$252.25	shuffle		
2C Dock C	oppostor / / Touch	Duttons	60GB (Oct 2004)		\$322.00	512MB	M9724LL/A	\$78.49
3G - Dock Connector / 4 Touch Buttons			60GB (Feb 2005)			1GB	M9725LL/A	\$89.52
10GB	M8976LL/A	\$98.70	Fewer Pack-ins)	M9830LL/A	\$270.00	nano		
	15GB (Apr 2003) M8946LL/A \$113.33					nano		
15GB (Jan 20			1G mini			2GB, black	MA099LL/A	\$180.00
Fewer Pack-i	*	\$96.41	4GB, silver	M9160LL/A	\$145.77	2GB, white	MA004LL/A	\$172.11
20GB	M9244LL/A	\$121.34	4GB, blue	M9436LL/A	\$141.90	4GB, black	MA107LL/A	\$225.00
30GB	M8948LL/A	\$145.83	4GB, pink	M9435LL/A	\$148.25	4GB, white	MA005LL/A	\$214.38
40GB	M9245LL/A	\$159.34	4GB, green	M9434LL/A	\$146.00			
			4GB, gold	M9437LL/A	\$143.00			

iLounge Holiday Buyers' Guide

Our Free iPod Book pointed out the advantages of using Amazon.com's Marketplace to buy and sell used iPods, but the supply has dried up a bit since then. That's good for sellers, who will stand out more, and bad for buvers, who will have fewer choices. Here are the only

20GB B&W U2 iPod: **\$219** \$299-\$368 40GB 4G iPod: 20GB Color iPod: \$228 60GB Color iPod: \$325-380 6GB 2G iPod mini: \$221

Amazon.com Marketplace



We've also provided some trade-in prices so that you can get a sense of how much you'll get towards the purchase of a newer model by disposing of an old iPod. **Small Dog Electronics** (smalldog.com) offers these prices for working

used iPods we saw online before we published this issue:

iPods, with a mere \$25 credit for a non-working salvage unit. The numbers in parentheses show price changes since Fall.

10GB iPod (3G) 15GB iPod (3G)	\$50 (-\$20 \$60 (-\$40
20GB iPod (3G)	\$80 (-\$40
30GB iPod (3G)	\$100 (-\$40
40GB iPod (3G)	\$120 (-\$40
20GB iPod (4G)	\$90 (-\$40
40GB iPod (4G)	\$130 (-\$30
20GB iPod photo	\$110 (-\$40
30GB iPod photo	\$125 (-\$40
40GB iPod photo	\$140 (-\$40
60GB iPod photo	\$180 (-\$55
4GB iPod mini	\$65 (-\$25
6GB iPod mini	\$95 (-\$10
512MB iPod shuffle	\$40 (same
1GB iPod shuffle	\$65 (same

Just remember - you'll need to buy something to qualify for Small Dog's prices, a factor that might make options such as eBay more appealing, though less convenient and easy.

Another site, **PodSwap.com**, buys and trades used iPods. The company has provided this list of its trade-in prices for "excellent" iPods.

Should I Sell? Should I Keep? **Advice from iLounge Editors**

re-introducing the iPod

The choice whether to sell your old iPod to buy a new one will depend mostly on one factor: your budget. If you have the cash, consider keeping the outdated iPod around to use for a specific purpose: a dedicated in-car jukebox - at least, in climates with stable temperatures - or as an easy way to back up your computer files, especially with an iPod shuffle.

What do we do? The answers vary from editor to editor. Some of us now horde iPods as eventual collectibles, but most of us sell old ones to finance the purchase of new ones every year or so. Many of our 4G iPods went out the door when the 5G iPod came out, and the same thing happened with some of our iPod minis in favor of iPod nanos.

It's important to note that we always sell rather than trade in - for now. Today, the difference in prices is too sharp, and it's easy to find people who are interested in buying well-kept iPods, particularly ones without engraving. A nice polish of full-sized iPods with Radtech's Ice Creme before snapping eBay photos may well boost your final price, too.





"Our goal was to design the very, very best MP3 player we could," said Apple Vice President of Industrial Design Jonathan Ive in a 2001 iPod ad (left), "to design something that could become an icon. And we'll see whether that is the case or not. But certainly as a design team, I can't remember the last time where we were collectively lusting after a product as badly as we are, oddly, after an iPod."

November 2: iTunes 2.0 is released for the Mac, adding iPod support, ID3 and metadata support, MP3 CD burning, and sound control features such as an equalizer and crossfading.



(photos credit Apple)

A Brief History of iPod + iTunes.

In the beginning, Apple touted the iPod's symbiosis with Macintosh computers as key.

But the company's fortunes reversed when it embraced PC owners, built its own music store, and lowered its prices. Now Apple sells more iPods in one month than it did in two years. And there's no sign of a slowdown.



October 23: Unexpectedly, Apple announces the first iPod at a price of \$399. Unlike most (but not all) competing digital audio players available at the time, Apple relies on a hard disk for

storage instead of flash memory or interchangeable CD-ROMs, and uniquely focuses on promoting the small size, power, and ease of use of its device. The first iPod has a 5 Gigabyte storage capacity - enough for over 1,000 songs and works only on Macs, using iTunes to convert and organize music. Did Apple release iTunes with the iPod in mind? According to an official Apple timeline, development of the iPod began only six months before its release. On November 10, the first iPod shipped.

December 31: By the end of 2001, Apple has sold a meager total of 125,000 iPods. Consumed by terrorist attacks on New York and Washington, Americans are paying little attention to luxury goods.



Sing, Don't Talk.

ple's early online ads for the iPod e as high-concept as the device lf: celebrities Seal, Moby, and Steve ut as the company quickly learned, it's



■ Beautiful Way

Come Away With Me

10 d d One Fine Day The C 11 d Beats To The Rhyme Run I

9 Underneath It All

iLounge Holiday Buyers' Guide

July 17: iTunes 3.0 is released for the Mac, adding support for Audible audio books, ratings, smart playlists and playlist import/export. To provide software for its new PC-ready iPods, released this day, Apple includes MusicMatch, another company's program, which is adequate but not fantastic.



October: Sensing the appeal of small high-capacity music players, Creative releases the Nomad Zen Jukebox as a cheaper (but still larger) competitor to the iPod. Its prior hard-disk based jukeboxes were the size and shape of portable CD players, while this one fits uncomfortably in a large pocket. At this point, the importance of Apple's use of a super-small 1.8" hard disk, a bright white display, and easy controls in all iPods is not fully appreciated.

My Top Rated

Oct. 02 iPods sold at Best Buy, Target & Dell



March 20: Apple announces a 10 Gigabyte (2,000 song) update to the iPod for \$499. New iPods ship with the ability to display business card-like contact information, and some begin to wonder about future PDA-like expansion of the iPod's abilities. At this time, the iPod is still a Mac-only product, but workaround programs that let iPods work with PCs begin to trickle out.



July 17: For the first time, separate PC-compatible iPods are unveiled: some models include a new touchsensitive Scroll Wheel instead of an actual moving wheel, which was easier to damage. And as a \$499 20GB iPod debuts, old iPod prices drop - 5GB to \$299, 10GB to \$399. However, all the new iPods still connect only to FireWire ports, which are far less common on PCs.

October: By this point, large retailers Best Buy. Dell, and Target have all started to sell iPods - a kev to increasing

December: Apple unveils its first and only limited edition iPods, featuring the engraved signatures or logos of Madonna, Tony Hawk, Beck, or No Doubt for an additional \$49. At a total price of \$548, these limited edition iPods were for some time the most expensive ever sold by Apple.





Madonna's Encore?

Pod have swirled for months, especially Chat AV - have now passed without it.

March: Microsoft announces development of Media2Go, a new hardware and software standard that combines video and audio playback in one portable device. Originally targeted for a holiday 2003 release, the devices are eventually renamed Portable Media Centers (PMCs), and delayed until late 2004. Microsoft hints that they're the company's "iPod killer."

April 28: iTunes 4.0 is released for the Mac, adding the AAC audio codec, support for DVD burners, networked music library sharing, and album artwork. Apple also launches the iTunes Music Store with 99 cent per track (\$9.99 per album) pricing and a library of 200,000 songs. Unfortunately, neither iTunes nor the music store is available for PC users, who are becoming a larger part of Apple's iPod business.

May 5: One week after opening the iTunes Music Store, Apple has sold 1,000,000



October 16: Apple releases both iTunes 4.1 and the iTunes Music Store (iTMS) for U.S.-based PC users, phasing out support for the less popular MusicMatch PC software in the process. Total iTMS sales are now at 13,000,000 songs.

iLounge Holiday Buyers' Guide

Apr. 28, 03 iPod 3G, iTunes 4, and iTMS introduced

June 19-23, 03 USB 2.0 for iPod & 1M iPods sold

Oct. 16, 03 iTunes 4.1 for PC debuts

May 5, 03 iTMS hits 1M songs sold

Sep. 8, 03 iPod 3G 20GB & 40GB debut

June 19: Apple finally releases USB April 28: 2.0-compatible cables and drivers for 3G iPods, expanding the range of iPod-Huge news: friendly PCs. On the 23rd, the company unveils the sells its one millionth iPod, more than a year and a half after releasing the device,

September 8: Apple refreshes the middle and top of the 3G iPod line with higher storage capacities at familiar pricing. A 20GB (5,000 song) model replaces the 15GB version at \$399, and a 40GB (10,000 song) model replaces the 30GB version for \$499. Sales continue to be brisk - by past standards.

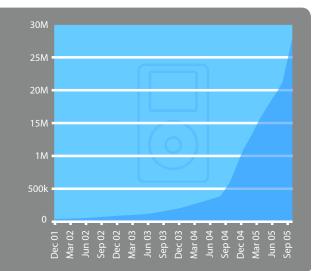
October 16: Belkin and Apple jointly announce voice recording and digital photo storage peripherals for the iPod, expanding the device's capabilities past music playback.

Sales of the iPod, 2001-2005

and online retailers see solid demand.

There were several turning points in iPod sales: the May 2003 release of the third-generation iPod - the first iPod that could work with PCs or Macs

This time last year, our chart showed the iPod at under 6 million. Today the number's at 28 million and climbing. The key contributors? iPod mini and the fourth-generation iPod, released in January 2004 and July 2004,



January 8: At the Las Vegas Consumer Electronics Show PC heavyweight Hewlett-Packard unexpectedly announces that it will license the iPod from Apple. It promises to release and sell a "HP blue"-colored iPod by Summer, and says that it wil pre-install iTunes on its PCs and tout it to its customers almost immediately.

April 8: iTunes 4.5 is released. Having reached out to some PC users in version 4.2 by letting AOL accounts download iTunes Music Store songs, Apple continues its push by adding automatic Windows Media Audio (unprotected WMA) file conversion to iPod-compatible format. It also adds the high-definition Apple Lossless compression format.

June 15: After releasing iTunes 4.6 with AirTunes to provide AirPort Express wireless access to iTunes music, Apple opens the iTunes Music Store in three European countries: France, Germany, and the United Kingdom. U.K. media complains that Apple doesn't have enough local indie music in the catalog. But one week later, 800,000 songs have been sold to European customers, 450,000 in the UK alone.

July 11: The iTunes Music Store sells its 100,000,000th downloaded song, the first legal music download service to hit that milestone. A prize package worth \$13,200 is awarded to the downloader of the song. Ten days later, Apple adds three top European indie labels to the iTMS catalog.

July 26: Motorola announces that its next generation of cell phones will be iTunes-compatible.

July 26: RealNetworks releases Harmony, enabling songs sold by Real to be played back on iPods without Apple's permission. Apple soon blasts Real and implicitly threatens a suit.

Jan. 6, 04 iPod mini debuts

Apr. 8, 04 iTunes 4.5 released

June 15, 04 iTMS France, Germany and UK launch

May 5, 04 3M iPods sold

July 11-17, 04 iTMS = 100m, iPod 4G debuts

Jan. 8, 04 HP iPod announced

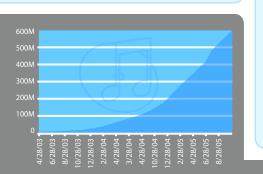
January 6: Apple debuts the iPod mini, a smaller 4GB version of the iPod available in five metallic colors at \$249. Despite an impressive simplifying redesign of the iPod's control scheme and casing, critical opinion of the device is initially mixed because of price and capacity concerns. Apple simultaneously replaces the \$299 10GB entry-level iPod with a 15GB model, and retailers almost immediately discount the discontinued 10GB model to \$249, further clouding the value equation. **February 17-20**: Apple ships its first iPod minis, and long lines form at stores for its official Friday on-sale date. Sellouts and near-sell-outs are reported nationwide, and critical opinion quickly turns in the device's favor.

May 5: Apple announces the sale of the three millionth iPod, only four months after hitting the two million mark. By this point, analysts and journalists are now widely acknowledging the iPod as the digital audio market's dominant hardware format, and making fewer positive references to cheaper competitors.

March 25: Apple pushes back the international release of the iPod mini from April to July, citing "much stronger than expected demand" from U.S. customers. Analysts report shortages of the miniature hard drives required by Apple. It will take until July 24 for Apple to actually ship minis worldwide.

iTunes Sales, 2003-5

albums were overpriced and piracy was rampant.





July 17-20: Leaked before the official announcement, the fourthgeneration iPod debuts online on the 17th. Boasting improved battery life (12 hours), iPod mini-style Click Wheel controls and thinner bodies, the 4G iPods generate considerable buzz and ship by the 20th. Called lower-cost iPods, prices for the new low-end (20GB, \$299) and mid-range (40GB, \$399) units look good until consumers discover that numerous pack-ins (Docks, remote controls, and cases) have been stripped from the new iPods' packages.

38

Apple

"third-

generation"

new iPods are even thinner and

smaller than before, feature a

bottom Dock Connector port

FireWire port, and have entirely

touch sensitive controls. The new

iPods have higher capacities than

prices: now 10GB (2,000 songs) is

\$299, 15GB (3,700 songs) is \$399

and 30GB (7,500 songs) is \$499. All

the new iPods now work on either

Macs or PCs. Between May 1-4, the

new iPods begin to sell in stores.

Apple will never be the same.

2G iPods offered for the same

rather than a top-mounted

iPod. The



September 7 - October 4: In the week after the quiet launch of the first Portable Media Center (PMC) device, Microsoft begins an anti-iPod public relations offensive. In an interview, Chairman Bill Gates says that the iPod would have been "easy" for Microsoft to make. Later, at a time when Internet-based viruses plague Windows PCs, the company says that a new Windows OS will prevent iPods from unleashing viruses on PCs, though no such iPod attack was reported. Finally, CEO Steve Ballmer publicly calls iPod users music thieves, claiming that nis products offer better copy protection. He later apologizes.

November 11: Retreating for the first time from releasing proprietary ATRACformat music devices, Sony announces a MP3-ready Walkman. By year's end, Sony and Warner executives are publicly discussing plans to take away the iPod's lead in digital music.

August 10: The iTunes Music Store catalog hits 1,000,000

September 1: iTMS hits 125 million downloaded songs. Apple starts to market its new iMac G5 computer as "from the creators of iPod," rather than the other way around.

October 12-14: iTMS downloads hit 150,000,000, a rate of 4 million downloads per week.

October 27: Apple releases iTunes 4.7, adding the ability to transfer photos to the iPod Photo, as well as the ability to easily screen out one's duplicate tracks and delete them.

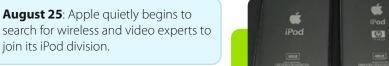
Aug. 10, 04 iTMS catalog at 1M songs Sep. 1, 04 iTMS 125M songs downloaded

Oct. 12-14, 04 iTMS 150M downloads/2M iPods shipped Q3

Aug. 25, 04 iPod video plans?

Aug. 27, 04 HP launches iPod+hp Oct. 26, 04 iPod U2 & photo debut

Oct. 27, 04 iTunes 4.7 released



search for wireless and video experts to join its iPod division.

October 12-14: Analysts report that iPods represent 82% of all digital music player sales and 92% of all hard-drive based players; nearest hard drive competitor Creative has 3.7%. Over 2,000,000 iPods were shipped by Apple in the prior 3 months alone.

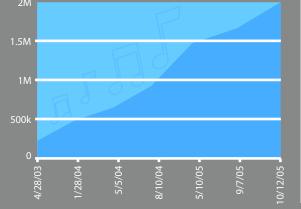


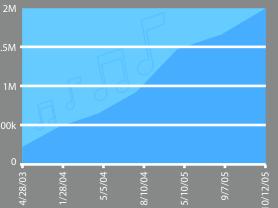
August 27: Hewlett-Packard announces the "Apple iPod from HP" (or "iPod+hp"), a repackaged version of the 4G iPod with new manuals and HP-supplied technical

support. Promising availability by September 15, HP begins to ship units almost immediately, and announces an iPod-compatible printer and "printable tattoos" to cover iPods.

Growth of the iTMS Catalog, 2003-5

a 200,000-song library, featuring exclusive tracks from "over 20" artists.









October 26: At a special event at the California Theatre in San Jose, Apple debuts a color-screened version of its recent 4G iPod called iPod Photo (\$499-\$599), available as premium 40GB and 60GB models for the holidays. It also launches the iPod U2 Special Edition (\$349), a black-bodied version of the black-and-white screened 4G iPod, with the engraved signatures of the four members of the rock band U2. Six million iPods have been sold to date.

One day later, the iPod Photo debuts in stores, and on November 16, the U2 iPod appears in stores.

January 25: U2 Silhouette ad is named smartest ad campaign by Business 2.0. By month's end, Apple is named the top



global brand in a survey of 2,000 ad professionals.

> **April 19**: According to reports, wireless providers Verizon and Sprint balk at carrying the upcoming Motorola iTunes phone.

Front Row: Apple Media Center?

Is this the future of in-home music, photo, DVD and video clip viewing? Introduced in October, 2005, Front Row for Macintosh computers combines a highresolution iPod-style interface with remote controlled access to a complete collection of audiovisual content. Presently available only for one Mac - the iMac with

which it's bundled - Front Row is intuitive and beautiful, though simple, and not yet capable of appearing on your home TV without special hardware. But it could (and we think, will) easily become the all-purpose interface for an Apple push into living rooms.

> May 12: With his Portable Media Centers failing to generate consumer interest, Microsoft's Gates again rips the iPod, saying that its success won't last.

June 28: iTunes 4.9 adds free downloads of radio-like audio "podcasts" to the iTunes Music Store, plus iPod-ready playback.

July 6: Three weeks after England's Queen Elizabeth II purchased an iPod mini for herself, President Bush receives a 4G iPod as a birthday gift from his daughters, and has aides load it with music for his workouts.

Jan. 25, 05 Apple named top global brand

June 28, 05 iTunes 4.9 adds podcasts

May 2, 05 HP to sell iPod shuffle & mini

Jan. 11, 05 iPod shuffle debuts

Feb. 23, 05 Apple Camera Connector debuts

and drops 60GB

It also introduces

a \$29 Camera

photo transfers

to the iPod can

without iTunes

synchronization

be achieved

model's price (\$449).

January 11: Apple introduces iPod shuffle, the smallest iPod yet developed, at \$99 (512MB) and \$149 (1GB) price points. Lacking a screen but possessing ultra-simple controls, the shuffle allows only one playlist or randomized playback of a fraction of one's music library, and doubles as a USB storage drive. Apple adds Autofill to iTunes 4.7.1, a one-button way to fill and re-fill the shuffle with new music every time it's connected to a computer By February, Apple controls 43% of the flash player market, and by May, 58%.

lan & Annie's Fa

Movie Shorts

February 23: Only **iPod shuffle +hp** 1GB four months after releasing the 40GB **iPod mini + hp** 6GB iPod photo, Apple discontinues both **May 2**: Having rolled out its version it and the black and of the iPod photo on April 12 - six white 40GB iPod. months after Apple - HP reportedly The company then plans to sell the iPod mini and introduces the 30GB iPod shuffle, as well. The delays are iPod photo (\$349) surprising, given the companies'

offs of the iPod shuffle and mini appear at Computex trade show in Taiwan. On the same day, Apple agrees to settle a class-action lawsuit brought by iPod owners over battery defects, and will replace batteries or provide cash or credit, by model.

June 2: Blatant knock-

Connector so that 30GB PC+Mac

public relationship.

June 28: Announcing a "merger" of its iPod and iPod photo lines, Apple discontinues the last of its black-and-white fullsized iPods, replacing them with cheaper color iPods at \$299 (20GB) and \$399 (60GB) prices. The company also drops the price of the 1GB iPod shuffle to \$129.

iPod history 2005 iLounge Holiday Buyers' Guide iLounge Holiday Buyers' Guide

August 9: Apple fails in an attempt to secure a patent on the iPod interface. Initially, Microsoft is blamed, but by month's end, Creative Labs is discovered to have won a related patent covering a key aspect of digital music navigation. Creative immediately suggests that it will enforce the patent against companies such as Apple, others believe it won't stand.

September 7: Apple releases iTunes 5. Staff reviews of music are added, along with a streamlined look, easier search features, and preferences menu changes.

Apple states that 600 million iTunes songs have been sold, an average of 60 songs for each of 10 million iTunes accounts. As of this date, over 2 million songs can be downloaded, the largest catalog of any digital music store online.

August 27: The New York Times reports that Sony and Warner want Apple to raise iTMS prices, and that Sony is making CDs incompatible with iTunes. In September, Apple fires back, refusing and calling the labels "greedy."

iTunes 5

Carpopin 6 2000-2006 Aprils Carpopin 6 Aprils 6 April 6 Apri

Oct. 31, 05 1m videos sold through iTunes

Oct 12 05 (Ped 55 (video) 6

July 29: Having recently replaced the CEO who signed the landmark deal with Apple, HP ends iPod sales, claiming that repackaging iPods wasn't a good fit with its future business plans. By end of this month, iPod is estimated by NPD to have 74% total market share in MP3 players.

September 7: At a Special Event in San Francisco, Apple

abruptly discontinues its "most popular iPod", the mini, and replaces it with the smaller iPod nano (2GB/\$199, 4GB/\$249), in both black and white color options. The company also announces a special edition engraved Harry Potter iPod, and the launch of Motorola's first ROKR (E1) phone.





Will the Real Slim Shadow Please Stand Up?



What's the ideal iPod commercial? Great music, an iPod-heavy focus, and memorable visuals. Apple's first silhouette ads were catchy, but got old. A second take featuring U2 performing Vertigo was refreshing, though familiar. Cingular evolved the concept for ROKR E1 with both silhouettes and mirror images as reflections of real people. Now Apple has another new take.

Today's silhouette ads feature more detailed backgrounds and characters than before: small elements of clothes can be seen plus more fleshed out environments and splashes of graffiti-

style color. Rapper Eminem stars in the first TV spot, which spotlights the 5G iPod, iTunes, and his greatest hits album Curtain Call. His appearance signals a public end to his dispute with Apple over the company's earlier unauthorized use of the song Lose Yourself in an iPod commercial. The same song appears in the new ad, as Em raps in an urban courtyard and pushes one of Apple's silhouettes.

Oct. 12: Gathering media for its second Special Event in five weeks - this one titled "One More Thing," a reference to CEO Jobs' catch phrase for an important announcement saved until the end of a speech - Apple debuts the fifth-generation iPod with video (30GB/\$299, 60GB/\$399). Billed as an iPod "with video as a bonus," the new iPod features a 2.5", 320 x 240 screen and enough battery life to play videos for between 2 or 3 hours, depending on which model you purchase. It is the first full-sized iPod not to include a FireWire cable or power supply, omissions from the earlier nano and mini. But it does include a nice, simple case. Like iPod nano, it is introduced in both white and black versions for the same price, and uses an interface highly similar to the iPod photo released a year earlier. It appears in stores a week after the event.

October 12 & 31: Apple releases iTunes 6 with video downloads. Five TV shows and 2,000 music videos are debuted for \$1.99 per download. At 320x240 resolution, they are formatted for iPod viewing and cannot be burned as videos to DVDs. Gifting, song recommendations, and reader reviews are also added. Rounding up September 2005 sales, Nielsen Soundscan says iTunes controls 84% of the legal music download market. At month's end, Apple says 1 million iTunes videos have been purchased.

2001 2003 2003 2004 2004

iPod aogs Market



iPod history









2005

A Super-Brief History of iPod Boxes & Pack-Ins.

The iPod achieved luxury status by combining excellent engineering and marketing.

Opening the box used to be almost as exciting as what was inside. But over time, that's changed - a lot.

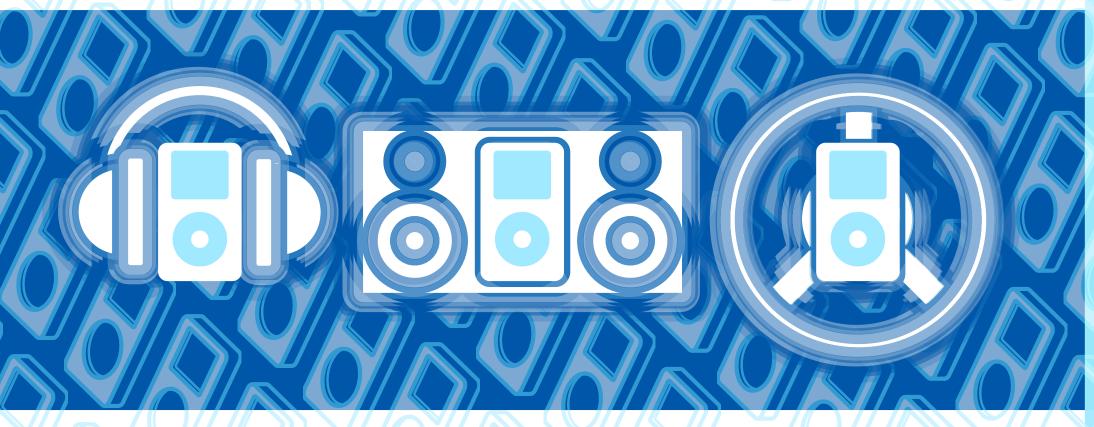
Cubes have been a recurring theme in products released by Apple CEO Steve Jobs: during his time away from Apple, he developed the cube-shaped NeXT computer, then released the PowerMac G4 Cube, then packaged every iPod inside an amazing cube-shaped box - one you opened, compartment by compartment, to reveal manuals, accessories, and the iPod itself. Starting in 2001, this lasted until 2005, at which point every iPod was in a rectangular box - iPod mini and shuffle went first.

Pack-ins for iPods have also changed. Every iPod has included earbuds, manuals, and software, but from there, they've varied. The original iPod included a FireWire cable and an AC adapter, as did the 2G iPod's 5GB Mac version, but the PC version included a 4-pin to 6-pin FireWire adapter. The 10GB and 20GB Versions also included an iPod Remote and iPod Carrying Case. Then the 3G iPod arrived. The 10GB (\$299) package included slightly new earbuds, an AC adapter, a FireWire cable, a 4-pin to 6-pin adapter,

and Dock Connector covers. More expensive 15GB and 30GB (\$399-499) packages included a Dock, Remote, and Carrying Case. When dropped to \$299, the 15GB iPod lost the Dock, Remote and Case.

Apple's first iPod mini package was the first to include cables for USB and FireWire connections. It also included a plastic Belt Clip and AC adapter. But the 2G mini dropped the adapter and FireWire cable - only USB charging was possible. With the release of the 4G iPod, the real cost-cutting began: Apple stopped including Remotes and Cases with black and white models, only including a Dock with the more expensive \$399 model. Later iPod photos (\$499-599) included 3G-like pack-ins, plus a new AV cable and Photo Dock, but Apple later dropped them at the same time as it dropped iPod prices. Today's iPod nanos and 5G iPods come with USB cables, no adapters, and no docks; 5Gs include cases. iPod shuffle? A necklace, nothing more.

THE TEN MUST-HAVE ACCESSORIES



FOR YOUR IPOD

We've reviewed over 650 iPod accessories. You don't want to read about all of them.

So we picked only our favorites, then sorted and summarized them here. You can't go wrong with any of these picks, but read the reviews for color.

Because different people have wildly different needs, preferences, iPods and budgets, there's no such thing as "the single perfect iPod speaker" or "the only ideal iPod case." That's why each of our Buyers' Guide's ten sections offers more than one accessory choice - sometimes as many as eight or nine. In each section, we try to show you the one we think is best, all things considered, but also list other great options you might want to look at if your tastes are different from ours.

Each mini-review includes the current suggested retail price for the add-on and the letter rating we assigned it at the time of its review on iLounge.com. Only A (highly recommended) and B (recommended) rated products appear in these pages - other products are shown in the Report Card pages that follow. You'll find more details on our ratings in our Report Card, and full versions of our reviews at our comprehensive reviews page, ilounge.com/index.php/reviews.

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The iLounge Report Card | 80

Ratings of over 650 iPod add-ons and iPods, taken from the full reviews we've published since 2001.

Headphones and Earphones. You can do a lot better than Apple's iPod pack-ins on both comfort and sound quality. Better options are available at every price point - here are the best of them.

\$50 and Under: Decent sound, superior comfort.



Sony MDR-EX81

Cheap earphones aren't known for comfort or audio quality, but the EX81s are standouts. Three sizes of included silicone rubber tips create a great seal with your ears, and for the price, you'll find the sound to be clean and nicely balanced. We found them supremely comfortable, but even moreso than with most in-canal earphones, their soft white tops may fit your ears differently, so buy them locally or through an online retailer with a good return policy. You can find them for under \$35, too.

Price: \$50 Rating: A

Price: \$30 Rating: B+

ezGear **ezEars SX50**

The most comfortable in-ear phones all

clone Sony's soft silicone tips, and the

SX50s are no exception. Cheaper than

a sizing standpoint, these sound quite

good for the price and do a nice job of

matching the classic iPod look. If you're

beware, they don't include a case or the

looking for a cheap way to replace

Apple's freebies, consider these - just

multiple sizes of silicone tips that the

EX81s pack in at no extra cost. ezGear

sells a case called earPod separately.

the EX81s and not quite as versatile from

\$150 and Under: Surprising clarity, superior style.



Etymotic **ER-6i**

Once in your ears, the ER-6is singlehandedly teach you the difference between \$150 headphones and their cheaper brethren: for the price, their sound clarity and balance are unrivaled. Previously hidden details will appear in every song you own, leading you to revisit all of your old favorites again. And the "i" is for isolator - in addition to their comfort, they block out most outside noise. White ones are already available. with black ones about to appear, too. Their cords aren't noisy, either.

Price: \$149 Rating: A

What do all of these picks have in common? Silicone rubber tips, which stay snug in your ears and feel better inside than Apple's hard plastic buds. Foam works too.



XtremeMac FS1

There are two camps of music listeners: those who prefer balance, and those who prefer bass. FS1 is a bass superstar, emphasizing rich, smooth sound instead of the neutral, accurate audio in ER-6i. As with Etymotic's offering, you'll hear greater detail in your music, but largely notice it in beats and low strings. The only major downside: prepare to use FS1's flesh-toned ear foams rather than the slick but uncomfortable rubber ones above. When you do, you'll love them. A nice case is included for the price.

Price: \$150 Rating: B+

Why Do Earphones **Really Matter?**

Bad ones garble your music. You may not even realize how muddled songs sound until you try a pair of \$150 phones. Once you do, you'll never, ever go back.

Your ears will feel fatigued. Apple's iPod pack-ins bend your ears in ways that won't like bass - and many people do - there feel comfortable for hours of listening. Softer rubber tips keep your ears happy.

Apple's pack-ins lack bass. If you really are earphones designed to bring out the best in thumps, strings, and bass lines.

\$300 and Under: Stunning detail or extended bass.

Ultimate Ears super.fi 5 Pro & EB

Affordable Ultimate Ears? We almost couldn't believe it, either, but that's what the super.fi series offers, depending on your definition of "affordable." The super.fi 5 Pro earbuds (\$250, above) deliver everything from clean, balanced sound to a great fit kit of earpieces and two cases, while the \$50 less expensive 5 EB model is made for extended bass., and delivers. You'll take a hit on detail with the EB version, and also find their bigger bodies impossible to hide in your ears, but if you're looking for thump, they're superb - noticeably better than the FS1s or iM716s.

Price: \$200-250 Rating: A-



Etymotic **ER-4P**

Last year's Headphone of the Year is almost as stunning today: the ER-4P is still a reference-quality earphone, rendering audio detail at levels by which other earbuds can be judged. Even by comparison with the premium UE-10 Pro, it is only a little less responsive in bass - not a major difference given the huge gulf in prices. Like the iM716s, their only issue is cord noise - you'll hear microphonics if you move around, so use the shirt clip or relax while listening. Shop around for a sub-\$200 deal.

Price: \$330 Rating: A

Price No Object: Professional grade looks and audio.

Shure **E5c**

Like the UE-10s below, these E5cs (\$499) are top-flight in-canal phones, boasting two drivers per ear worth of clean, powerful sound in an attractive enclosure Unlike cheaper offerings, they come with gift-ready trappings: a premium metal box and an equally

nice carrying zippered case. Our only issue: though they include eight ear inserts for great isolation and sound, they vary a lot from user to user on comfort because of their enclosures and wires.

Price: \$499 Rating: A-



Ultimate Ears **UE-10 Pro**

In-canal phones don't get more deluxe than the UE-10 Pros, each containing three separate drivers (most have one) together creating pristine sound with slightly extended bass response. The odd shapes are actually custom-made to fit only your ears during an appointment with an audiologist. Once they're inside, you'll experience unparalleled noise isolation for in-canal phones. They're the ultimate luxury for serious listeners, and include a personalized metal carrying case, to boot.

Price: \$900 Rating: A-

Need more options? Our Report Card for Headphones is on Page 83 of this Guide, and our full-length Reviews are available at ilounge.com/index.php/reviews/.

Other Premium Phones: These are a few other top-end options that have made strong impressions.



AKG Acoustics **k701**

If a slicker and more comfortable pair of over-the-head earcups has been developed, we haven't seen them: the k701 Premium Class Reference Earphones won our earbud-toting editors over. Silky smooth, detailed sound leans warm, but lets highs pop and creates a vivid stage. Listening is enhanced dramatically by velvetcovered cans, which you won't want to take off - maybe ever. And the white and chrome body matches the iPod, to boot; a genuine leather band up top adds old-school class. They're too large to carry around, but for in-home listening with an iPod or stereo, this is our top pick. Our review unit came with a 1/4" plug, 3.5mm adapter, and 10-foot cord; AKG's currently deciding whether to release this in the U.S. with a plug just for portables, or as-is.



Price: \$399 Rating: A

a clip-laden bass-boost box? That's iM716, designed by

Etymotic for Altec to satisfy cost- and quality-conscious listeners. If you like detailed sound, pick HD mode, or use Bass mode for stronger mids and lows. "Stronger" is the key word: though the mid-bass gets a boost, you won't hear a low-end thump comparable to super.fi 5EBs or other bassy phones; pick these for the definition. Foam and standard Ety triple flange earpieces aid in good isolation and comfort. Unlike ER-4P, these are available in white, but like 4P, you'll hear a lot of cord noise when you move around - especially in wind. They're best indoors, and used with the shirt clip.

Altec Lansing iM716 and 616

Ninety percent of ER-4P's clarity at 60% of the MSRP, plus

Price: \$200 Rating: B+

Similar in appearance, the black iM616s step down from 716s on price and audio quality: they're touted as similar in clarity and slightly better in frequency response than Etymotic's ER-6i, but we found them brighter than the ER-6i with identical triple flanges; they sounded better with foams. Thicker cords than the ER-6is create more noise in the buds when you move. But they're nice-looking, and come with a hard case.

Price: \$150 Rating: B+

Fun phones: The look's more key than the sound.

Design Annex iBeat

Sure, you can hear your music through any pair of headphones, but iBeat's appeal is different: thanks to glowing cords (in your choice of six colors), you can actually see your music pulsing to the rhythm. If you're just looking for a way to light up a party, you can put the cords on always glowing mode, or turn them off for regular listening. Audio quality's roughly the same as Apple's iPod pack-ins, so the real appeal here is just the visual novelty. Given the low price, our only issue's the battery pack iBeat requires: you need to use an included plastic holder with your iPod to enjoy it.

Price: \$30 Rating: B+

Apple iPod nano **Lanyard Headphones**

Earlier lanyard headphones have turned us off, but these - designed specifically for the iPod nano - are so minimalist and useful that they're bound to attract interest. Yet they're also overpriced: the audio quality's no better than Apple's free pack-ins, and they don't offer anything more than a way to hang your iPod on your neck. If you can get them as a gift - or need something to eat through two Andrew Jacksons when buying a gift for a nano owner - consider them. Otherwise, wait for a thirdparty alternative like the ones shown in Sneak Peeks, and until then, pocket (and protect) your nano.

Price: \$40 Rating: B-



OtterBox for iPod

What could be better than to give a case that will protect for a lifetime? OtterBox cases are 100% waterproof, airtight, and protect from those accicendental drops. Cases are available for photo, 20gb B&W, mini, shuffle, and nano. Order online at: www.otterbox.com Call us toll-free: 888.695.8820. Happy Holidays from all of us at Otter Products.

Speakers and All-in-One Systems. Earphones are great when you're listening quietly and alone, but if you want to share your music, rock the house, or serenade at the beach, you'll need these.

Ultra-Portables: Decent sound, carried anywhere.

Macally IP-A111

Formerly known as PodWave, the IP-A111 miniature speaker system has three major assets: it's small enough to fit in any pocket, physically compatible with any iPod, and sounds guite good for the price. While you won't fill a room at its maximum volume level, you and another person or two will enjoy it. A new "pro" version (IP-P111) with an integrated microphone is coming soon, as well.

Price: \$39 Rating: A-

Pacific Rim Technologies **Cube**

Shown here with an encased iPod mini Cube is the best pocketable speaker system we've heard. Its bottom cradle is optional, detaching to fold the rest up into a 2.4" x 2.4" by 4" box. And like IP-A111, it works with any iPod, but Cube provides better volume and clarity at a similarly low price. Both systems require batteries - this one, four AAAs - but you can also buy an AC adapter for \$5. A very solid option.



Portables: Better sound, for commuting or travel.

Logitech mm50

Great sound. A remote control. A charging iPod dock, included case, and an integrated rechargeable battery. What's wrong with mm50? Virtually nothing. As a portable speaker system, this one rivals or exceeds the audio performance of almost everything we've seen, and is even worthy of use when you're not on the road. Its only issues are width - it's around 13" wide - a limited-range remote and modest user adjustability.



Price: \$150 Rating: A-

JBL On Tour

If you don't need the horsepower of mm50 or don't want to carry around something so large, On Tour is a great pick. Though it lacks mm50's frills, its twin-speaker design sounds wonderfully crisp for the price, and its collapsible, batteryor wall-powered body will fit in any bag. Though it lacks greater user adjustability, a dock, or remote, its touch-sensitive volume controls are easy to operate. Black and white versions are now available, each with a power adapter and audio cable.



Price: \$100 Rating: A

How noticeable is the difference between smaller speakers and big ones? Quite. Clarity, volume, and bass can all increase as speakers get bigger, but not always.

What Should I Really **Look For in Speakers?**

Pick a size right for your actual needs. Do you really need speakers you can toss in a bag? If not, go for non-portables: they're the best bang for the buck.

Make sure they sound good to your ears. Avoid pushy salesmen and rigged speaker tests - visit an Apple Store and do your own real-world comparisons.

Read our detailed reviews. Some speakers let you tweak bass and treble to your liking. Others sound bad at high volumes. iLounge.com reviews tell all.

Semi-Portables: Strong sound you can move - sorta.

Altec inMotion iM7

The best semi-portable speaker system we've seen this year is also the best iPod speaker overall, iM7 combines an original, stunning design with tremendous bass response, full user treble and bass controls, and enough amplification to rock any party outdoors or indoors. Powered by wall or battery power, it'll go anywhere you can carry it. Its only flaw is a poor remote control, which works only from short distances. Otherwise, it's a total winner.



Price: \$250 Rating: A-

Bose **SoundDock**

No speaker system has made a greater impact on the iPod accessory market than this one, an ultra-simplified way to charge your iPod and listen to its music. A great remote control helps you change volume and tracks from afar, and most people will love the rich, smooth sound. While it's not iM7's peer on value or audio adjustability, and runs only on wall power, SoundDock remains one of our top picks.



Price: \$300 Rating: B+

Non-Portables: Leave them in one place and enjoy.

JBL Creature II

If you're on a budget or don't need an iPod dock or remote, these are the best - last year's Speaker of the Year. Now available in five colors (white, black, gray, metallic silver, and metallic red), the multi-faceted Creatures continue to be the best values in

2.1-channel audio you'll find anywhere. Treble and bass knobs aive you full control over the sound of your audio, which sounds great for the price -\$65 if you shop around.

Price: \$100 Rating: A

Klipsch **iFi**



Price: \$400 Rating: B+

As the priciest speaker system yet released for the iPod, Klipsch's iFi also has one other claim to fame: unbelievable bass. Its eightinch standalone woofer literally creates sound that you can feel across the room, while its two reference-quality satellites offer impressive detail. Equipped with a dock, iFi's only major flaws are its size, less than iPod-specific design, and iffy remotes (ask for a new battery). But if it fits your room and your budget, it's worth a try.

Need more options? Our Report Card for Speakers is on Page 83 of this Guide, and our full-length Reviews are available at ilounge.com/index.php/reviews/.

ten must-have accessories

iLounge Holiday Buyers' Guide

iLounge Holiday Buyers' Guide

ten must-have accessories

Unique Audio Alternatives. If looks or novel features are what you want - and sound quality's secondary these eye-catching new speaker systems may well find a place in the corner of your home or office.



Ignitek iCarrier

There's no iPod speaker system taller than iCarrier, a showpiece design that owes most of its three-foot height to a substantial subwoofer at the bottom. While not the peer of comparably priced iPod speaker systems in overall build quality, iCarrier makes a very strong visual statement, has fairly powerful sound, and includes a remote control. Place it somewhere public, and wait for the comments.

Price: \$250 Rating: B



Oregon Scientific iBall

Designed largely to appeal to women, iBall starts with a stylish eight-inch globe packed with three speakers, including a ported subwoofer, and a two-color LCD screen with an analog clock. Then there's a separate iPod dock that can be resized to fit any iPod - even the shuffle, with an optional adapter. Here's the twist: put the dock next to your computer, television, or stereo and connect it up for syncing,

iHome iH5 Clock Radio

A clock radio with iPod integration? That's iH5, which for the price does a legitimately very good job of playing iPod music and serving as a fulltime alarm clock. All of the alarm clock basics are here - a snooze button. two separate alarms, good FM and AM radio tuning - but now you can wake up to your iPod, too. The remote is free with purchase from certain stores, including Apple (look for "iH5R"), otherwise sold separately.

Price: \$100 Rating: A-

Macally **IceTune**

Slick style, interesting features, and cheap. IceTune offers a complete iPod docking and charging system - one that glows ice blue at the bottom - with two detachable, repositionable speakers. The audio quality's fine for the low price - the lowest, in fact, of any docking iPod system - and you can either stack the speakers in a tower or spread them out to your heart's delight. A great option for younger Podders.

Price: \$70 Rating: B+



charging, or video. Then take the speaker wherever you want within 100 feet, or mount it on a wall, and control the iPod from the speaker's top. Audio quality's alright, but it'll be the talk of any party it attends.

Price: \$300 Rating: B-

Altec iMmini

Though there are more fully-featured and iPod-agnostic speaker systems out there, iMmini is the only docking, battery-powered portable speaker designed specifically for the size and shape of the now-discontinued iPod.

And it's actually a legitimately good little speaker set, too: while not loud, the sound is a bit better balanced than Altec's larger, bassy inMotions - other than the great iM7, that is - and the size is just right to fit into any bag.

No case is included, but you do get a front plate to protect the speakers, and a wall charger. Best of all, the price is right for bottom line-conscious shoppers.

Price: \$130 Rating: A-

Altec FX6021 Powered Audio System

Though it's way more sophisticated than your average iPod speaker system, the FX6021 is just right for today's Macintosh computers - particularly ones equipped with Apple Cinema Displays, but also the leaning LCD screens of iMacs. Each of the system's two adjustable satellites contains six separate drivers, properly tuned to provide appropriate crossover and smooth, low-distortion high-and mid-range audio. The substantial subwoofer creates booming low-end - enough for DVD watching or serious music enjoyment. User volume, bass, and treble controls are found on the separate digital control box, and a remote gives you infrared access from a distance. It's hard to underscore just how much we love this system, beyond to say that we use it ourselves, and can't think of any reason we'd want to replace it.



that brand new Apple Cinema Display, these are the very best options we've tested.

Single iPod- or Mac-Specific Speakers. If you're hunting for speakers to match a specific iPod model, or

Logic3 **i-Station** shuffle

Four or five companies have released iPod shuffle-specific speaker systems, but none have come close to what i-Station shuffle accomplishes. Though it's been achieved for other iPods, the simple integration of docking, charging, syncing, and audio output has been too tough for most companies to make simple for the shuffle. This system handles all of that, and more, at a reasonable price.

Like more expensive portable speakers, it runs off of an included wall charger or batteries, and comes with a carrying case. We'd class it as a good sounding speaker overall, but shuffle's best by far.

Price: \$50 Rating: A-



Price: \$250 Rating: A



Cases and Armbands. Whether you're trying to avoid iPod blemishes, looking for a convenient workout carrier, or just trying to create a personalized look, cases of various types will be necessities.

iPod Shuffle Does the inexpensive, all-plastic iPod shuffle really need protection? No surprise - many people think the answer's yes. These are the best designs we've seen this year, starting with silicone.



Tunewear **Icewear**

Before iSkin's Shuffle Duo came along Icewear was our favorite shuffle case: good price, cool, ribbed sides, separate detachable covers for the iPod's standard and lanyard USB caps, and a mini chain to hold the cap and body together. All that's exposed is shuffle's rear power switch. Unique looks and solid protection preserve Icewear's value, even today.

Price: \$15 Rating: A



Power Support Silicone Jacket Set

While simple in adornment, Silicone Jacket provides virtually comprehensive protection, a detachable clip, and covers for both types of USB caps. It also has the very best rear power switch cover we've seen - a ring that makes it easy to select shuffled or standard playback modes. While it's pricier than other options, the quality is very high, and worth it.

Price: \$25 Rating: A-

Silicone cases are well-suited to the shuffle's body because of their sizes and light weights. If you need moisture protection, Shuffle Duo or Otterbox are tops.



iSkin **Shuffle Duo**

There may never be another iPod shuffle case as well-designed and protective as Shuffle Duo - words we don't speak lightly. It took 9 months for a case maker to figure out how to stylishly cover every millimeter of this iPod, with flip-open headphone and USB panels, but with two layers of silicone, this case does it - and beautifully. A great detachable necklace is included.

Price: \$20 Rating: A



XtremeMac Tuffwrap

One of our early shuffle favorites remains on our list of top picks because of its excellent variety of vivid color options (9, sold in 3-packs) and its low price per case. While not as protective as our other options, Tuffwraps are easy to wear on your neck, feel good in your hand thanks to side grips, and make buttons easier to use than competitors, for better or worse.

Price: \$25 Rating: A-

Hard Cases: Keep your shuffle safe, no matter what.



Core Cases **Aluminum Shuffle**

Metal cases are easy to find for other iPods, but not for the shuffle, and rarely in so many colors. Internally padded, the Aluminum Case for iPod shuffle uses surprisingly vivid metals to legitimately change the look of your shuffle while adding hard protection. A smart three piece design - including a really smart, thin detachable belt clip - makes shuffle insertion and removal easy, while holes for controls and the headphone port provide adequate access for day to day use. Best yet: reasonable pricing.

Price: \$20 Rating: B+



Otterbox **Shuffle**

Let's say you need more hard protection than just "most of your shuffle" - you want every millimeter covered, and guaranteed to be dust- and waterproof (to 3 feet) besides. Your only option, luckily a great one, is the shuffle version of Otterbox, a case we've loved for every other sized iPod. While you can't access shuffle's rear switch, you can access its front controls and battery light. A detachable neck lanyard's included; an armband's \$15. Pricier than Apple's Sport Case, it's better for extreme athletes and some swimmers.

Price: \$30 Rating: A-



Apple **Sport Case**

The gold standard hard case was not only the first one released, but also Apple's first major case innovation in years. Sport Case is smaller and cheaper than Otterbox, equally compatible with all headphones, and includes an unfortunately non-detachable necklace. It rates high on looks and value, makes shuffle front control easy, and does Apple's designers very proud indeed.

Price: \$29 Rating: A

Workout Gear: Shuffle at the gym or on pavement.



iMojo shuffle Sweats DLO Action Jacket

So simple, yet so comfortable and useful. If you're not so much in need of protection for your shuffle while you're working out, shuffle Sweats are the ideal way to carry the little iPod around. They're soft, include an integrated cord manager, and fit comfortably on your forearm rather than your bicep. And by comparison with most of the iPod accessories we review, they're pretty cheap: two for the price of one, so that you can wash one while wearing the other. We'd pick this as a top choice on comfort, and pair it with a shuffle case from the prior page's assortment to enhance its protectivity. The elastic holder will hold the shuffle either way.

If you want a single option that provides both case-style protection and a workout armband, Action Jacket is the best we've seen. Neoprene iPod cases were verging on goofy until Apple, DLO and others began to vulcanize (read: bake) the material, decreasing its puffiness and shininess. Using that process, the Action Jacket case holds your shuffle without looking bulky, and even uses a clipping system to detach from the nice elastic bicep band. Pocket your shuffle or wear it on your arm it's your choice. Clear plastic protects the shuffle's controls, but the back ones are always covered - a small issue. Pricier than shuffle Sweats, but for some, better.

Price: \$18 Rating: A-

Price: \$25 Rating: A-

Need more options? Our Report Card for iPod shuffle Cases is on Page 82 of this Guide, and our full-length Reviews are available at ilounge.com/index.php/reviews.

iPod nano

If you buy a nano, you'll need - and we emphasize the word need - to protect its body. Case and sticker makers are rushing options to market; these are the best of the ones we've tested.



T KIE

Apple nano Tubes

Last year, Apple released the generic iPod Socks, which split the iLounge editorial team right down the middle. A box of six socks for \$29? Crazy, some thought. But cool-looking, said others. With nano Tubes, there's no such issue. You get five nicely contoured silicone rubber cases for less than the price of one Speck ToughSkin - and they're more protective, besides, covering nano's entire top. Our only issues: holes at the screen and bottom.

Price: \$29 Rating: B+

A1QP iKeychain

If iPod nano's lacking for any one thing right now, it's hard cases, and iKeychain was the first option to meet that demand. Based upon a design that previously worked for iPod shuffles, its two halves - colored the same or differently - are held together by magnets, and a headphone port hole's just right for typical iPod earphones. The only issue: do you want keys to scratch your nano's screen and wheel? More protection would be nice.



Price: \$40 Rating: B+

Vaja Classic AP161

It's not the i-Volution case we're really waiting for from Vaja, but for now, Classic AP161 is one of the top luxury leather designs for iPod nano. With more than thirty colors across two grades of leather to choose from, plus optional two-color combinations, you'll get a totally customized nano holder with a magnetic flip-open lid. The design will appeal more to some than others, but if you're looking for pure class, start right here.

Price: \$40 Rating: B



It's not often that we're favorably surprised by the design and build quality of a case, but Ambassador pretty much nails all the nano requisites: it's thin but not too thin, beautifully trimmed on its edges, protective of the nano's entire face, back, and sides with only small exposed portions on top and bottom, and includes smart detachable hook and belt clip options. Overpriced? Yes. But wow, it looks and feels good.

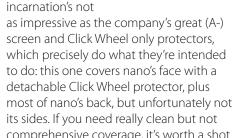


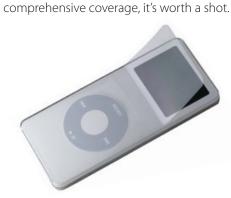
Price: \$50 Rating: B+

Power Support Crystal Film for nano When it comes to clear protective films

When it comes to clear protective films for various iPod models, Crystal Film is unquestionably

amongst the very best we've seen: truly clear, high-grade coverage that's easy to apply, and won't leave adhesive on your iPod's surfaces when removed. As a body protector, the nano incorpation's pot





Price: \$15 Rating: B+



InvisibleShield nano Full Body Protector

The typical film protector for an iPod requires that you follow three steps: peel off backing, place on iPod, and reposition until correct. InvisibleShield has a different formula: make bowl of soapy water, apply to fingers, then fronts and backs of stickers, position stickers on iPod, reposition until correct, and let dry for a couple of hours. Air bubbles or other problems? Peel the film off and start again before it dries. Or try - it's tough. We weren't blown away by the end results, which looked less like "invisible" than like slightly baked Saran Wrap, but it guards the nano's entire body save very small portions - more than Crystal Film. If you don't want a case, try it.

Price: \$20 Rating: B+







Incase Sleeve & Sport Cases

Neoprene is exceedingly tricky to make attractive on a case - particularly for a thin iPod-but these two cases from Incase both pull it off. The cheaper Sleeve is just an iPod nano case with a belt clip, neoprene on the sides and plastic on the front and back, tailored with Incase's typically excellent attention to detail and including clear screen and Click Wheel protection. Right out of the gates, it's one of the best iPod nano designs we think we'll see given its materials, and it does a great job of protecting nano's body.

Virtually identical to the Sleeve in case design, Sport adds \$10 to the price and includes two additional components: a detachable armband and a detachable hand strap, both made with attractive and elastic soft fabric. Because of the designs of the two bands, you can wear nano upright or upside down, and in any case will get better protection than you would from Apple's iPod nano Armband. The only hitch: a small hole in Sport's top precludes it from being totally moisture resistant. Otherwise, it's an awesome case.

Price: \$20 Rating: A-

Price: \$30 Rating: A-

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Need more options? Our Report Card for iPod nano Cases is on Page 82 of this Guide, and our full-length Reviews are available at ilounge.com/index,php/reviews/.

Few truly excellent iPod nano cases have been released since the nano debuted in early September. See the new iSkin Duo in Sneak Peeks for another great option.

Fourth-Generation iPod If you have a July 2004-September 2005 full-sized iPod (B&W or color) with Click Wheel, these are the best cases we've seen.

Vaja i-Volution/iVod

Now that the 4G iPod and iPod mini have been discontinued, we can say for certain that these cases were the best premium leather cases ever made. Both words are key: best, because their body designs, assortments of colors (like Rasta, below), and overall feeling of quality were never touched by competitors, and premium, because their prices signaled an investment in the continued good looks of your iPod. Great Click Wheel protectors clear or in record-colored DJ versions were also breakthroughs. Other than a new iPod, they're the single best gift here.



Price: \$60+ Rating: A

Sumo Cases PlayThru Vertical

There are two types of cases we strongly prefer: expensive-looking cases that make the iPod shine, and more affordable cases that we'd take anywhere. PlayThru Vertical is the latter: a soft, stylish combination of leather and ballistic nylon cut to provide complete, flip-open protection for as much of your iPod as you want. Better looking, more protective, and easier to use than virtually all of the PDA-style flip cases we've reviewed, this case design is right for iPod owners of all ages, and both genders, thanks to smart color choices and fair pricing. Available starting Thanksgiving.

Price: \$30 Rating: A-

STM Cocoon Series

Travel cases have one specific application: they're guaranteed to keep your iPod safe inside a bag no matter what you're going. Cocoon cases - available for iPods, minis, and nanos - provide semi-hard reinforcement on all sides save their tops, which have small holes for your headphone cords. Open them and you'll find a mesh earbud holder and a rubber iPod case for when you're not traveling. A thin-profile belt clip's on the back if you want to wear it. Two cases in one is a great idea, and equally great value.



Price: \$40 Rating: A

Though discontinued, the fourth-generation iPod benefits from a tremendous assortment of cases at widely varying prices. Only a handful are worth over \$35.

Marware TrailVue

As noted in describing PlayThru, PDA-

plastic makes these cases tough, snug-

harder than PlayThru, this is the best

Price: \$35 Rating: A-

iPods in the future.

Hard Cases: Keep your shuffle safe, no matter what.

Otterbox 4G

Comprehensive hard plastic protection. Full-time screen and Click Wheel access. Full compatibility with every major type of headphone. And complete protection against water (even 3-foot submersion), dust, and the like? There's only one case that

iLounge Holiday Buyers' Guide



offers all of this for full-sized iPods, and we've tried it deeper than 3-feet underwater; it works. Our only major gripe is the so-so foam insert pads for thinner iPods.

Price: \$50 Rating: A/A-



Contour **Showcase**

If you're willing to compromise a bit on protection, namely the iPod's Click Wheel, top, and bottom ports, you'll find our 2004 iPod Case of the Year a knockout on looks, build quality and value. Available in white or black trim, these cases largely show off your iPod's front and back - hence the name - and also have smart detachable belt clips.

Price: \$33 Rating: A-

Matias **iPod Armor**

Impervious? iPod Armor is very close. A perennial favorite of iLounge editors and readers, the aircraft-grade aluminum enclosure is rock solid, exposing only portions of the iPod's top unless you flip open its front face for screen and control access - better for some than others. A nice detachable belt clip and nub add zero thickness unless you want them.

Price: \$40 Rating: B+

Price: \$35 Rating: A

Workout Gear: Shuffle at the gym or on pavement.





Sport Case

Like SportSuit Convertible, the Multifunction Sport Case combines a neoprene iPod holder with a detachable lid and separate detachable armband. Then it goes further, including a detachable handband, a better standalone iPod case design that not only looks a bit cooler, but also uses smart top and bottom designs that expose only as much of your iPod as is minimally necessary. And did we mention it's cheaper, besides? There are a few small reasons you might prefer the SportSuit, such as Incase's simpler belt clip, but it would be hard to design a better 4G armband than this.

Incase **Multifunction** Marware **SportSuit** Convertible

For many moons, SportSuit Convertible was the best iPod armband we'd seen, and even today, it still outclasses 95% of its competitors. Though slightly higher priced than Multifunction Sport Case, its style is different - Marware sells it in six different colors, including red - and it uses a strong detachable Multidapt belt clip system, which is compatible with numerous car, boat, and clothes mounting accessories developed by famed clip maker Krusell. And you may also prefer its soft rubber side grips and bottom port cover to the trimmer, zipper-open Incase design. A fun pick.

Price: \$40 Rating: A-

Need more options? Our Report Card for iPod 4G Cases is on Page 80 of this Guide, and our full-length Reviews are available at ilounge.com/index,php/reviews/.

Pod min

Even though it's been discontinued, the toughest-bodied iPod was also the best-dressed, thanks to its fashion appeal. Many of the most useful and fanciful designs we've seen appear below.



Power Support **Kimono Case** Series

In early 2005, Japan's Power Support debuted designs that were radically different from the silicone rubber iPod cases it pioneered back in 2001: the fabric and leather Kimono case was made by Kyoto's Miyavix, and had a texture and look totally unlike any other iPod case we'd tested. With mini, 4G and shuffle versions now available, Kimono has changed our view of what is important in a case: though it exposes the Wheel, style is important, and its sell-outs are a direct result. The shuffle one's not as usable as the others, but still beautiful.

Price: \$25-40 Rating: A-/B

a.b. sutton **Handmade Leather Cases**

Customization is uncommon enough in the world of iPod cases, but New York's a.b. sutton has taken the concept to a new level. You choose from over 40 colors of leather, 70 colors of silk, six fonts, and any one letter - upper- or lower-case. They'll cut the case from one of several styles, prepare its trim and threading to your tastes, and cut the letter or a pattern from its front or

back surface. Pricey? Yes, but the quality, detail, and style are impressive.



Tunewear **Prie mini**

Only three leather iPod mini cases have really fired us up: Prie is the cheapest. Whether you pick the surprisingly nice leatherette (Classic), true leather (lux) or sheepskin (Pearl), you'll get dainty arm and handstraps, and a choice of three or four colors per type of material.

Price: \$25-45 Rating: A



Power Support Square Type Jacket

Our 2004 iPod mini case of the year was (and is) a standout in the cluttered world of silicone iPod holders. Square Type turns mini into an ice cube-like block, reflecting and distorting its colored metal in an almost prism-like way. Thanks to included screen and Wheel film, it's super protective, too. Can we pray for the 5G?

Price: \$22 Rating: A





Speck **ToughSkin**

One of the biggest surprises in 2005 was the emergence of Speck Products as a bold case designer. It had mastered the art of covering any iPod, but not enhancing them. ToughSkin was one of the first cases to break this mold. With ruggedized corners, screen and Wheel protectors, and very smart attention to other iPod details, it is great on the 4G iPod, and nearly perfect on mini.

Price: \$35 Rating: A

Hard Cases: Keep your shuffle safe, no matter what.

Matias iPod Armor

Just as attractive as and arguably more functional than its full-sized iPod version, iPod Armor mini provides hard protection for all of the mini's body save

its open top. A flip-open front panel makes mini's controls fairly easy to access, while a clear window shows off its screen at all times. The metal look? Plating; it's plastic inside. But still tough. And now cheap, too.



Innopocket **Magnum**

Magnum's approach to hard protection is unique: it has a textured magnesium back, a clear hard plastic front, and holes strategically placed to make the mini easy to use and remove. While these holes - one each on the front, back, bottom and top - expose a bunch of the mini's body, Magnum's five colors look good enough that you mightn't mind.

Price: \$15 (!) Rating: A-

Price: \$30 Rating: B

Otterbox **mini**

If you've seen the iPod 4G and shuffle versions of Otterbox, you already know generally what to expect from the iPod mini version of this water- and dustproof case, but there's actually a bonus or two here: there's no so-so padding to worry about in this version, and it's also small enough to comfortably wear on an optional armband (\$14.95). Like the 4G Otterbox, there's a detachable belt clip on the rear, too. A top-class option.

Price: \$50 Rating: A

Workout Gear: Shuffle at the gym or on pavement.

Speck Mini SkinTight Armband

If you're looking for an iPod mini armband that compromises between the minimalist style of Apple's official Armband and Marware's bigger option, SkinTight is just the right choice. For about the same price as Apple sells just the band, you get an equally good vulcanized neoprene armband with a hard plastic iPod mini holder, plus a rubber-like case that keeps your mini safe on or off the armband. It's a good value, a nice design, and a fine (though not perfect) case for the iPod mini, so long as you're not concerned about fullbody scratch or moisture protection.

Price: \$30 Rating: A-



Marware **SportSuit Convertible mini**

Comprehensive iPod mini workout protection comes at the cost of added bulk: like its bigger 4G iPod version, the SportSuit Convertible mini offers a three-piece solution, starting with a neoprene

and rubber case, continuing with a detachable hard lid, and finishing with a nice bicep strap. Unlike SkinTight, you have a choice of six good colors, plus the option to add the lid at any time to protect the mini against poor weather conditions or whatever might be rattling around in your bag or backpack. But you'll pay a bit more.

Price: \$35 Rating: A-

Need more options? Our Report Card for iPod mini Cases is on Page 81 of this Guide, and our full-length Reviews are available at ilounge.com/index.php/reviews/.

iPod mini case choices range from the feminine and unisex (highlighted above) to rugged (shown at right). Prices under \$25 are right for all but the very top cases.

If you're looking for a case with unique looks and a pouch-like body that's big enough to hold any iPod even the new 5G iPod - here are a few of the most memorable options we've reviewed in recent months.



Moshi/Aevoe iPouch

We really don't like pouch designs. Ninety percent of them are generic

and offer nothing better to iPod owners than they could make themselves. But of all of the cases that we've reviewed,

iPouch may have grown the most in our estimation with the passage of time. It's mindlessly easy to toss your iPod inside the main compartment, then your earbuds into the special second pocket, using the drawstring to keep the iPod snug inside. Four colors across two sizes (iPod/mini) are available, and each actually cleans your iPod as you walk. It's

Price: \$15 Rating: B+



When we first reviewed Santa, we noted that it was a great case for one very specific time of the year. That time, of course, is now. And for many people, it's going to be hard to imagine a better way to wrap a brand new iPod up as a gift than with one of these. Full-sized iPod, mini, and nano Santas are out; Marware also makes other furry pouches for girls, each with less seasonal appeal than these.

Price: \$20 Rating: B+



HotRomz Cases

There's no single word that can describe the entire lineup of HotRomz' handmade cases, but the most likely one is "fuzzy." Though none of the cases provides visual access to an iPod's screen or controls, all of them erupt with texture

and color, shooting tufts of yarn, foam, an iPod's sides. And each one comes wrapped in a gift box with a certificate of

mohair, or feathery acrylic fiber off of authenticity. As a gift for

someone else - or a treat for yourself they're always soft, and as outrageous as you can handle.

Price: \$17-25 Rating: B

Though Apple's iPod Socks (iLounge rating: B-) stretch out, most pouches - including all of the ones above - come in various sizes that fit specific iPod models.





simple, but good.



In-Car Accessories. Retire your old CD changer and tune out disc jockeys - the iPod's a much better companion while you drive. These add-ons let you access your whole library through car speakers.

Car Mounts: For a place to put your Pod, start here.



ILOUNGE

CAR ACCESSORY

Griffin **iSqueez**

If one of your car's cupholders is in the right spot for iPod mounting, iSqueez (formerly PodPod) is a cheap, solid solution. We originally scoffed at the idea that a soft sculpted foam insert for a cupholder would provide any value, but when we found that the inexpensive iSqueez actually fit our most oddly-shaped car cupholders, its stock shot up immediately. It fits full-sized or mini iPods, including holes for cables. No matter what, it's better than leaving your iPod on a seat.

Price: \$10 Rating: B+

ProClip **Padded Tilt Swivel Adjustable Mount**

Our favorite mounting solution is also the most expensive. A two-piece solution made to custom-fit your iPod and your specific vehicle, the Adjustable Mount both looks highly professional and resizes to safely grip an iPod inside or outside of any major open-faced case. A rotating and swiveling joint on the back lets you tweak the iPod's viewing angle to wherever you want it. While you'll also need a ProClip bracket made for your car - an extra \$30 expense - you won't find a solution that's better looking, fitting, or built.

Price: \$40 Rating: A

Chargers with Audio-Out: In-car power, plus more.

Belkin **Auto Kit**

connected to SiK's imp. It's a nice design, too.

Price: \$40 Rating: B+

SiK **imp**

For simultaneous iPod charging and audiophile-quality audio output, the imp (capitalization theirs) presently reigns supreme. Though not the slickest-looking car charger, it provides unfettered line-quality audio output from the iPod's bottom Dock Connector, plus a safe way to keep your iPod's battery topped off on the road. But because of the strength of its audio signal, it's appropriate only for cars with line-in ports - otherwise, pick Auto Kit.

Price: \$30 Rating: B+

There are dozens of iPod chargers out there, but Auto Kit is one of the two we use ourselves. The reason: it combines charging with an audio-out port, and controversially, a volume knob. As it turns out, though this knob modestly compromises audio fidelity, it lets you properly adjust your iPod's audio level for use with cassette tape adapters, which won't sound as good when

How Do I Connect My iPod to My Car?

You have three choices. The best is a line-in port - if your car doesn't have one. you can have one installed. If not, use a cassette tape adapter or an FM transmitter.

Too complicated? Our Spring/Summer 2005 Buvers' Guide outlines all of your options and the way to connect them to your car. It's free from iLounge.com.

Anything else? You may want a way to mount your iPod. There are cheap air vent mounts and professional-class mounts like ProClips. We prefer ProClip.

FM Transmitters: Easy connection, so-so quality.

The Standard iLounge Warning on FM Transmitters can be summed up in 5 words: they're not right for everyone. FM transmitters broadcast iPod audio to one station on your car's radio, fighting for control of whatever station you choose. But because of FCC regulations, these transmitters can't be too powerful, and so they often lose the fight if you try to conquer an already occupied station, or your car's antenna is too far away from the transmitter. Consider these only if cassette adapters aren't an option.



Kensington **Digital FM Transmitter & Auto Charger**

We're not easily enthused by FM transmitters, but as far as car-only options go, this one's on top. It produced strong, clean signals in our testing with several cars, was easy to tune, and also charged the iPod. Its too-high price can be mitigated by careful shopping.

Price: \$80 Rating: A-



Griffin iTrip with LCD

The biggest breakthroughs in portable FM transmission regrettably came at the end of the 4G iPod's lifespan: this topmounting iTrip's knob and clear screen offer super-simple tuning, and several broadcasting modes give you the option to lower noise levels by switching to mono mode, or toggle between US and International frequencies. It's a great design for 4Gs and minis, and now being retrofitted for use with the newest iPods.

Price: \$40 Rating: A/A-



NewerTech RoadTrip! 87.9

It's cheap and it works. RoadTrip! 87.9 is a super-simplified FM transmitter that plugs into your iPod's headphone port and broadcasts to only one station. Since that station is virtually guaranteed to be empty everywhere in the U.S., the sound is pretty impressive. But you'll have to give up iPod charging to use it, a major limitation.

Price: \$15 Rating: B+

Cassette Adapters: Quality audio for tape decks.



Sony CPA-9C

While not staggering, the CPA-9C tape adapter offers virtually complete car compatibility, does its job as well or better than all others, and sells for a reasonable price. It just offers no frills. You'll find its base level of audio noise better than almost any FM transmitter, and comparatively low mechanical noise versus other car cassette adapters.

Price: \$20 Rating: B+



Griffin **SmartDeck**

The ideal tape adapter would have equal to or less noise than CPA-9C, more features, and guaranteed compatibility with all cars. SmartDeck makes a valiant attempt, giving some car stereos the ability to control iPod tracks and play/ pause. But its results vary between cars, and it works only with 4Gs + minis. An improved nano + 5G version is planned.

Price: \$30 Rating: B+

Need more options? Our Report Card starts on Page 80 of this Guide, and includes a few car-related sections. Full Reviews are at ilounge.com/index,php/reviews/.

The ultimate iPod car solution lets a driver see the iPod's menus, control it, charge it, and pull its cleanest audio signal from its bottom. Assemble parts or buy a kit.

3-in-1 Devices: Mounting, charging and audio.



TEN Tech **flexDock**

There's no question in our minds that flexDock is the best charging, mounting, and line-out solution for iPod minis - the flexible gooseneck design we strongly prefer to other options proved sturdy in our tests, and the unit's audio output was excellent. Scrap its included tape adapter, though, for a CPA-9C. If you need a lighter-colored option, consider Belkin's TuneBase FM for iPod mini instead.

Price: \$50 Rating: A-



DLO New TransPod

If you want to add integrated FM transmission to charging, mounting and a line-out port, TransPod's a solid option. Using two adjustable plastic pipes, it mounts in your car's power charger port, then gets tweaked to a hopefully steady position. Good FM, strong line-out and simple tuning make it convenient; but buy locally just in case it's not right for your car; extra add-on mounts have disappeared from this version's package.

Price: \$100 Rating: B

Premium Kits: Big spenders get better results.

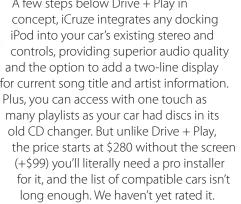


Harman Kardon **Drive** + **Play**

There's no iPod-to-car integration kit that compares with Drive + Play in scope: the combination of a large, 4-line user-tweakable screen, convenient separate control knob, and your choice of line output, FM transmission, or (optional) in-line FM is unparalleled, though the best sound options require a pro installer to hook it all up in your car. Though cheaper add-ons can together achieve similar functionality, this looks and feels far more sophisticated.

Price: \$200 Rating: A-















iPod Video covers at www.speckproducts.com



Kits such as these are designed to either let the driver see and control the iPod directly, or use separate controls (a knob or car stereo) to do so. Will they fit your car?

ten must-have accessories

iLounge Holiday Buyers' Guide

iLounge Holiday Buyers' Guide



Stands and Docks. Connecting your iPod to your home stereo or computer can be as easy as attaching one cable. But high-quality solutions can look and work significantly better. Here they are.

Simple Stands: Keep your iPod standing up.



Thought Out Ped 2

We've seen various iterations of Ped (formerly iPed), but Ped 2 is the best: an adjustable metal iPod cradle that resizes for iPods and minis, with or without their protective cases on. Two powder-coated colors are available - white nicely matches Apple's bright color - and it's easy to attach the cable and/or adapter of your choice. A solid desk mount.

Price: \$40 Rating: A-



PlasticSmith **tux**

There are numerous iterations of the tux stand: black base, white base, upright or reclining, iPod or mini, and so on. But our favorite one's pictured above: a clean acrylic way to display your iPod, trophy-like, on any flat surface. While there are drawbacks, most notably their lack of Ped 2-like adjustability, tuxes offer a distinctive look and elegance we liked.

Price: \$35 Rating: B

Simple Docks: Standing, charging and syncing.



Pacific Rim Technologies **Shuffle Cradle**

If you want a way to keep your shuffle standing up on a desk while it charges from and syncs with your computer. Shuffle Cradle is a cheaper and better option than Apple's iPod shuffle Dock. A blue light glows when it's on, and a USB cable's included. Simple and nice.

Price: \$11 Rating: A-

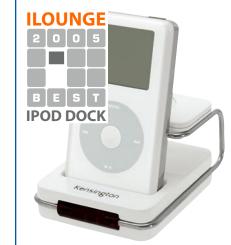


Apple **iPod Docks**

Since the release of the third-generation iPod in 2003, Apple's been selling Docks (\$39, B) - devices that at a minimum hold your iPod and connect to your computer for syncing and charging, most often include audio outputs as a superior way to connect your iPod to a stereo, and now also include S-Video outputs so that full-sized iPods can display photos and videos on a TV. The video-less iPod nano Dock (\$29, B) is comparatively tiny and simple, lacking video output, but the company's newest Universal Dock (\$39, B+) has data, audio, and video ports, plus two new features: guaranteed physical compatibility with every iPod released since 2003, and an Infrared sensor to connect with an optional Apple Remote control (\$29, B). They're sleek, and reliable.

Price: \$39 Rating: B+/B

Audio Docks: Remote controlled iPod music.



Kensington **Stereo Dock for iPod**

Before Apple introduced the Universal Dock, this Stereo Dock for iPod was unique - today, it's still the best package if you want to connect an iPod to a home stereo and control it from a distance. Every box includes a charging dock with line-level audio, one stereo cable, power supply, and Infrared remote control. As a bonus, the remote and dock both light up with nice red lettering when in use - a lot like the classic 3G iPod. All that's missing is video and data outputs, but it's a great package, and much cheaper than the MSRP listed below if you shop around.

Price: \$90 Rating: A-



DLO **HomeDock**

Substantially larger than Stereo Dock and a bit less color-coordinated. HomeDock uses the extra space on its back to add three things Kensington's product lacks: composite and S-Video outputs, plus a USB port for data synchronization. Designed to let you run a photo slide show from a color 4G or 5G iPod, the video features won't add much to black-and-white iPods or the nano, but you have the options to use this as a large computer- or stereoonly dock, as well. While competently executed, HomeDock's pricey - rarely found at a price near Kensington's, and under most circumstances, you'll do better with that or Apple's options.

Price: \$100 Rating: B

Docks Plus: One dock, one price, two features.

Belkin **Hi-Speed USB 2.0 4-Port Hub for shuffle**

The next smart idea: share an iPod dock's footprint with another device or cool feature. Here, you get a powered four-port USB 2.0 hub that's designed to mount a shuffle on top, all for the same price as Apple's super-simple shuffle Dock. With Mac minimatching styling, it's a no-brainer solution if you need extra USB ports, and comes with a power adapter, which is basically mandatory.

Price: \$30 Rating: B+





Atech Flash **iDuo**

And here's an even better idea: combine an iPod dock with a fully-featured flash card reader, capable of handling Compact Flash, Microdrive, SmartMedia, xD, Secure Digital (SD), MMC, Memory Stick and Pro. Cards go in the front, while any iPod or mini fits with a resizing bar found on the dock's top. Line-out, S-Video-out, and iPod data jacks are on the back. There's one catch: under the iPod data jack is a standard mini-USB port with a cable. Unlike Belkin's hub, you need to connect one cable for the iPod and another for the flash card transfers - an inelegant solution that saves space but wastes your ports. Why a B grade? It's only a few dollars above Apple's Dock, and does more.

Price: \$45 Rating: B

Need more options? Our Report Card for Stands and Docks is on Page 84 of this Guide, and our full-length Reviews are available at ilounge.com/index.php/reviews/.

What's the difference between a stand and a dock? Electronics. Stands are holders, while docks include parts that interface with your iPod's bottom connector.

 $oxed{69}$



Internal and External Batteries. Started to run low on power? Always low on power? Put a new battery inside your iPod, or add a battery pack just for times when you can't use a charger.

Internal Batteries: Replace Apple's, get more juice.



FastMac TruePower

What stands out most about TruePower batteries - now available for every iPod save nano and 5G - is their 2-year warranties: if they fall below 70% of their original capacities before the end of two years of reasonable use, you get a replacement. That's a great deal, especially considering that you'll also see run time from the 1G to 3G batteries that goes hours beyond what shipped with those iPods. The 4G battery's not as strong a performer on better-than-Apple hours, but still has the warranty.

Price: \$30-40 Rating: A/A-

Newer Technology NuPower 1G/2G/3G

Cheaper than TruePower but with a 1-year warranty, the NuPower batteries for 1G, 2G and 3G iPods offer at least equivalent run time to TruePowers sometimes a hint longer - and similarly come with a do-it-yourself installation kit. If you don't have nimble hands, consider the company's professional installation, but we found the hour-ish process to be nearly painless. You'll pay less than Apple's battery, and get better.

Price: \$20-35 Rating: A/A-

Battery Replacement Services: Keep old Pods alive.

In addition to the do-it-yourself options at left, several companies will replace iPod batteries for a fee - including Apple, which will replace a battery if it fails in the first year, or for \$65.95 thereafter. Third-party batteries often play and survive longer.



iPodResQ A flat \$64 price per iPod - or \$99 for two iPods at the same time - guarantees you both 2-3 day total turnaround from the day you place your order, and a highcapacity replacement battery. iPodResQ sends out the "iBox" above, a padded container with enough room for one or two iPods, also used for the company's repair services. (See **The Free iPod Book** for more details on these services.)

Newer Technology

Add \$39 to the price of any of the company's NuPower batteries to get 72 "week-day hours" total turnaround time for a professional installation (in the 48 states), delivered to you by FedEx.

FastMac

For \$39.95 over the price of its TruePower batteries, FastMac promises 24-hour internal turnaround for its replacement battery service, plus express shipping from and to you.

TechRestore

Though the \$69 price for its professional battery replacement service sounds steep by comparison with others, a \$99 "iPod Battery Freedom" service promises to put new batteries in your iPod for a "lifetime" - as long as you own it. The only catch: unlike the \$69 plan, you'll need to pay for shipping (\$20) to TechRestore every time you want a replacement.

Long-Term Planning and iPod Batteries

Rechargeable batteries are more cost**effective.** It may be cheaper to buy 9-Volt or other disposable iPod batteries. but you'll toss them out after one recharge.

Disposables are environmentally **uncool.** They consume as much space as rechargeables but can pollute at a rate of 500 for every 1 rechargeable battery.

Recycle your battery. Responsible companies, including Apple, will recycle or properly dispose of used rechargeable batteries. You can do the same yourself.

External Rechargable Batteries: Add. Drain. Charge.



BTI iPod Battery ii

Though larger than most, BTI's rechargeable Battery ii also offers better added run time: you'll get no less than two full days of added play, and quite possibly more. Our top pick for travelers who can't find outlets overseas.

Price: \$80 Rating: A-

Apple **iPod shuffle Battery Pack**

It always helps when the best featured iPod add-on is also best looking. The tiny, affordable Pack adds 22-24 hours of play time, and can be neck-worn, ezGear's bigger PowerStick provides more juice.



Tekkeon **myPower**

Thinner and easier to attach than Battery ii, myPower also adds less run time: 30-32 hours versus BTI's 55. But it recently fell in price, and now works with 5G iPods and an optional bottom-mounting FM transmitter - better for video and audio.

Price: \$60 Rating: B+



Price: \$29 Rating: A-

Enviro-Opposites: Toss'em or solar charge, you pick.



Griffin Technology **TuneJuice**

When you're on the road - especially when you're not in your home country the toughest thing to find is a wall outlet. That's when solutions like TuneJuice make the most sense: anywhere you find a 9-Volt battery, vou can add 4-8 hours of run time to an older iPod, depending on whether its battery is fully drained. While the TuneJuice strategy may well cost you more over the long run, and fill up landfills with disposable batteries, the add-on is initially very affordable, and cheap 9-Volts are easy buys.

Price: \$20 Rating: B+



Compact Power Systems Solio

If you live in a sunny climate or just have a strong desire to do what's environmentally "right," Solio provides an option: charge your iPod (or cell phone) using the power of the sun. A rechargeable battery pack is inside the unit, waiting for the sun's rays (or a nearby wall outlet if you're impatient), and you'll need about 10 hours of exposure to direct sunlight to fully top it off. In return, you'll get 13 hours of 4G iPod music, more with newer Pods. The sun isn't a reliable charger, but Solio is well-made and easy to use.

Price: \$100 Rating: B+

Need more options? Our Report Card for Batteries is on Page 80 of this Guide, and our full-length Reviews are available at ilounge.com/index.php/reviews/.

Though it may sound like common sense, we recommend replacing the internal battery of an iPod only when its run time falls to 50% or less of its original peak.



FM Radio Tuners. Unlike their competitors, iPods do not include FM radio tuners. So industrious add-on makers have created convenient add-ons with surprisingly robust tuning capabilities.

Griffin **iFM**

iFM is a delight: an FM radio tuner, radio recorder, voice recorder, and iPod remote control all in one. Paired with a 3G or 4G iPod, it works wonderfully, using a great radio tuning chip to bring in any FM station on the dial, comparable to or better than other portable radio-equipped devices we've tested. There's enough strength and clarity even indoors to satisfy virtually any listener, and the radio recording feature works just as promised, limited only by the older iPods' 8KHz recording rate. Voice recording? Not great, but not a shabby "bonus" feature. Sadly, it can't record anything with iPod minis (hence the B+ below), and won't connect to 5G iPods or nanos. Griffin's working on a replacement for November release.

Price: \$50 Rating: A-/B+



Congratulations to **Griffin Technology**, recipient of iLounge's iPod **Accessory Maker of the Year** Award. To be eligible for this award, a company needs to have demonstrated three qualities during the prior year: (1) excellence in products released, (2) innovation in design, and (3) outstanding customer service. Griffin won by a unanimous vote of iLounge's editors. **ILOUNGE**2 0 0 5 **B B T ACCESSORY MAKER - IPOD**



DLO mini fm

When Apple released iPod nano in September, the single smartest design advantage of mini fm turned out to be not quite as it had seemed only a couple of weeks earlier: it's a radio tuner that fits perfectly on top of any iPod mini. You know, the most popular iPod ever, and the one Apple joyfully killed to replace with iPod nano?

On the bright side, there are still literally millions of people with minis, and for them, this is a fantastic little product. It tunes radio about as well as iFM, but with a bit more bass for those who prefer it. And it also includes its own "bonus" feature - an integrated amplifier that lets you boost the playback level of iPod music by up to 25%, handy if you're using a European volume-capped mini, inefficient headphones, or a low-power speaker attachment such as the ultra-portable solutions we highlighted earlier in this Buyers' Guide. Battery drain is very low - an attached recent-model iPod mini still had 75% of its juice left after 24 hours of radio play.

The only other limitation worth mentioning is this: unlike iFM, the radio won't work unless you have headphones attached. If you're thinking of buying this, we're pretty sure you won't care.

Price: \$40 Rating: A-

Need more options? Our Report Card for FM Radio Tuners is on Page 83 of this Guide, and our full-length Reviews are available at ilounge.com/index.php/reviews/.

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Photo Transfer Adapters. Three add-ons let you transfer photos directly from a digital camera to a full-sized iPod without using your computer or iTunes. But they vary on features and compatibility.



Apple iPod Camera Connector

As the most recent of the three photo transfer devices to be released, the iPod Camera Connector also benefits from two unusual differences between itself and the others: it's the least expensive, a rarity for Apple, and also the only one compatible with the newest 5G iPods. It also works with color 4G iPods, but it won't work with black and white 4Gs, 3Gs, nanos, or minis. Plug it in to either supported iPod, then plug your camera or a supported flash card reader in with a USB cable, and one button press later, you're watching your photos move to the iPod. What better way to keep your memory cards fresh while you're on the go? The only things that will disappoint you: it's slow, and sucks considerable battery power from both iPod and camera. Better solutions are very much needed, but this is cheap.

Price: \$29 Rating: B+



Belkin Media Reader

By comparison with the iPod Camera Connector, the Media Reader is bigger, requires its own batteries (one set's included), and more expensive. But if you have a 3G or any 4G iPod, it may well be a better choice for your needs. That it's a hint faster when used with color 4G iPods is not important: it's even faster when used with black-and-whites. The key factor is that it won't drain your camera's battery at the same time as it drains your iPod's, because you're inserting memory cards directly into its housing. Released in 2003, it supports CompactFlash I and II, SmartMedia, Memory Stick, MMC, and SD cards - a list that's small and aging, but good enough for 90% of today's digital camera users. Unfortunately, it's incompatible with 5G iPods.

Price: \$40 Rating: B+



Belkin **Digital Camera Link**

A cross between the iPod Camera Connector and Media Reader, the Digital Camera Link is sort of the odd man out in this category. Not only is it as big as Media Reader, and require batteries like Media Reader - two strikes - but it also drains both the iPod and digital camera during transfers. It makes up for these omissions with a faster transfer speed than either of the other devices - more of a relative than an absolute improvement - a simple one-button interface, and a recently lowered price. Like Media Reader, it works with 3G and 4G iPods, but not the 5G.

Price: \$40 Rating: B

Transfers









Photo transfers with full-sized color iPods are better: not only can you see photo thumbnails during the import process, but you can view full-screen shots when finished - not on black-and-white iPods.





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Though there aren't any other photo transfer adapters available today, we expect new options soon. Reviews are available at ilounge.com/index.php/reviews/.



Voice Recorders. The good news: if you want to record audio with your third- or fourth-generation iPod, these add-ons will do it. The bad news: they're incompatible with minis, nanos, shuffles and 5Gs.



Griffin iTalk (2) Voice Recorder

There's little doubt in our minds that the original iTalk stood head and shoulders above the rest of the voice recorders developed for 3G and 4G iPods: it was the only one to include a good mic, speaker, automatic gain control and a port for either headphone listening or an external microphone attachment. Limited only by the iPod's own capabilities - an 8kHz sample rate and WAV format recording - iTalk served as an able conversation or lecture recorder, and could even do low-fidelity music sampling if placed near a radio.

Then Griffin set out to improve it with several new features in version 2 - the currently available model - but only one, a one-click recording and stopping button, actually made it in to the final product. Though disappointing for those expecting more, you still can't do better than this for older iPods. A 5G iPod-compatible version has not been announced.

Price: \$40 Rating: A-



iPod?

With the release of iPod nano and the fifthgeneration iPod, Apple made two important decisions about the future of the iPod family: first, recording is a premium feature that won't appear in nanos, and second, full-sized iPods deserve better than a 8kHz sampling rate. So the new 5G iPods are capable of recording in 44.1kHz stereo (that's CD-quality fidelity), or 22.05kHz mono for less demanding situations, both major boosts. Great, right? Yes, but you'll need all-new, bottommounting microphone add-ons, and iPods still only record in WAV.

Belkin TuneTalk for iPod

Like iTalk, TuneTalk requires a 3G or 4G iPod no 5Gs allowed - and permits voice-quality recordings with a decent microphone. TuneTalk's major advantages are a low online price and a wand-like design that keeps the recorder away from occasional iPod hard drive noises, a limited issue with iTalk and all other iPod recorders. The detachable gray foam at the top also provides a limited shield against wind. But it lacks a speaker output, wired microphone input, and other frills that make iTalk stand out so much. Worth a look if you like the style and find a good price; we've heard that it'll be available largely at the Apple Store through the holidays.

Price: \$30 Rating: B

Need more options? Our Report Card for Voice Recorders (Microphones) is on Page 83 and our full-length Reviews are available at ilounge.com/index.php/reviews/.



For iPod Shuffle

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RADTECH

Wireless Accessories. Whether you want to use an iPod as a stereo remote control or just add a remote to your iPod, these add-ons will do it - assuming you have the right iPod, and the extra cash.



TEN Technology **naviPlay**

It's almost amazing that one device - naviPlay - anticipated and included the features that would later appear in three separate types of iPod Bluetooth wireless accessories. Some, like TuneStage, turn your iPod into a music-filled remote control for your stereo: plug your iPod into naviPlay and its receiver into your stereo, and you're set. Others let you detach headphones from your iPod and walk around with them: naviPlay lets you use your favorite earbuds, so you can toss your iPod in a bag, then wear the receiver on your neck with an included lanyard. A built-in controller lets you change tracks, volume, and play/pause on the iPod. And finally, naviPlay pairs with Bluetooth phones: its receiver has an integrated microphone, and lets you interrupt iPod music to take calls. It even works with the 5G iPod. Plus, did we mention that it has rechargeable batteries and a charger?

> There are flaws. It works from only around 24 feet. And like other such devices, don't expect CD quality sound: it's very good, but not audiophile-level. Until Bluetooth 2.0 devices come out, naviPlay will be about as good as wireless can get.

> > Price: \$200 Rating: A-



Using an included stereo cable, the sound is output through line-out or RCA-style composite ports on TuneStage's rear. Though optical-out isn't supported - the audio fidelity is a bit under CD-quality - it sounds very good, and indistinguishable to most ears from the original source material. Is it a naviPlay competitor? Well, it's not portable, won't take phone calls, and so on, but for tethered use with a home stereo, it's great.

Price: \$180 Rating: B+

Remotes: Only for 3G, 4G and mini iPods.

Griffin AirClick Wireless RF Remote Control

Back in the good old days when iPods had a top-mounting accessory connector, AirClick stepped all over the iPod remote controls we'd previously tested by offering something they didn't: RF (radio frequency) transmission, which unlike Infrared can control an iPod 50 or so feet away, and even through walls. A sleek, easy to use remote design, including a belt clip and a Velcro mount for your car's steering wheel, added to its appeal, as did Griffin's decision to create AirClick USB receivers to control iTunes and other programs on Macs and PCs. But like other RF-based remotes, AirClick won't work fully with early (October 2004-February 2005) iPod photos., and as with all top-mounting remotes, it won't worth with the 5G iPod or nano.

Price: \$40 Rating: A-



Targus **RemoteTunes**

Take AirClick, double its RF broadcasting power, toss in an acrylic iPod stand and a stereo audio cable, and what do you get? RemoteTunes - also sold by ABT as iJet - currently the measured champion of older iPod remotes with confirmed performance at 100-foot distances. So why does it rate the same as AirClick? It's more expensive, both of its electronic components have a bit less appealing physical design, and the buttons aren't quite as nice as Griffin's. But if wall-piercing distance is what you need, get RemoteTunes. We wish this remote was built into iPod 5G and nanocompatible docks and speakers.

Price: \$50 Rating: A-

TEN Tech naviPro EX

The one and only thing RF-based remotes such as AirClick and RemoteTunes lack is what naviPro EX specializes in: lots of buttons. This crazy big remote features 13 different buttons, including the predictable play/pause, volume and track controls, but then moving into an extended collection of others: you can switch between albums, chapters, and playlists, ideal if you're listening to an audiobook through speakers, using the iPod's playlists while entertaining guests, or just browsing your albums one by one. There are also shuffle songs and repeat buttons.

Of all of the added features, only playlist selection worked unpredictably based on the iPods we tested with, while the other buttons worked as promised. But as with all IR remotes, expect 30-ish foot operation and no ability to broadcast through walls.

Price: \$50 Rating: B+

Need more options? Our Report Card for Bluetooth Wireless is on Page 80 of this Guide, and our full-length Reviews are available at ilounge.com/index.php/reviews/.

Need more options? Our Report Card for Remote Controls is on Page 83 of this Guide, and our full-length Reviews are available at ilounge.com/index.php/reviews. 76

Other Useful Add-Ons. While these items don't qualify for the top ten, we've found them very useful in specific situations that you may or may not encounter. Budget prices make them good stocking stuffers.

Griffin iFill

If you're trying to load your iPod with music, you've no doubt come across a major challenge even at 99 cents per song, it costs a lot of money to



fill an iPod shuffle, say nothing of a 60GB iPod. And then there's another challenge: no

iPod includes a radio tuner. So Griffin's iFill sits on your PC or Mac, monitoring multiple

Internet radio stations at the same time. Then it saves and individually tags songs to

files and replace them with new ones. Necessary? No. Useful? Yes, and a good way to

find songs to buy from iTunes, too. Our only issue - while it uses a nicer interface than

Ratavik's comparable program StationRipper, you can't do as much with its downloads.

your iPod for later listening. Connect your iPod again, and iFill can clear off the old



blueLounge cableyoyo

Ninety-five percent of cord managers really do nothing for us: given how well knots, twist-ties, and just not caring too much seem to work, we haven't warmed to the idea of paying for something to manage our cords. There are two exceptions - the inexpensive Sumajin for headphone cords, and cableyoyo for desktop cords. Three colors (white, silver, and black) are available, and in equal parts thanks to them and slick design, one cableyoyo (sold by RadTech)

Price: \$5 Rating: A-

is guaranteed to match at least Apple's iPod cables, if not your computer, desk, a nearby wall, or something else where it can be mounted. An adhesive backing is included, but not necessary; no matter where it rests, cableyoyo makes your cables look shorter, and better.



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Price: \$20 Rating: A-

Monster iSplitter

We're surprised at how often we find ourselves needing a way to connect two sets of headphones to an iPod at the same time, and when we do, this is always the add-on we turn to. Back when we first used iSplitter, it was more expensive than Macally's IceDuo (now PodDuo), and it's still larger, but Monster dropped the price and retained its gold-plated quality. The extended cable design will work with any model of iPod, and has done so reliably in all of our tests.

Price: \$10 Rating: A-

Talking Panda iBar

guick lesson. Have gin? Search by "gin." Or browse 1100 recipes. Or hear audio lessons on the history of many different drinks. 35MB of space is required.

iBar Studying 4 the Bar 50 Classic Drinks 1888 Drinks R-Z

Price: \$30 Rating: A-

A funny, informative way to learn a ton about alcoholic beverages? Yup. iBar's ideal if you're looking for drink recipes, bartending tips, or a

Speck **Grass FunSkin nano**

One of the coolest "fun" cases we've seen is the Astroturfesque Grass FunSkin, which coats an iPod nano (and soon, 5G iPod) in soft green or black spikes. In green, the look is as grass-like as advertised, but in black, a sleek, fancy iPod transforms into a tough little puffer fish - even better in person than in photos. As with Speck's other nano cases, a clear, hard screen protector is included, but there's no Click Wheel, top or bottom protection, and the price is high for something so simple. But it's almost novel enough on design alone to merit

Price: \$35 Rating: B+

Speck iGuy

If you take your iPod seriously, the concept behind iGuy mightn't make sense: he's a combination iPod case and stand, featuring posable arms, sturdy legs, and a clear screen protector. Couple him with a color 4G iPod or nano and you can display photos - faces or messages - on-screen in public; use him with older iPods or minis

and he's just a stand. Because of nano's bottom headphone port, that version's not as Backstage at iLounge later in this Guide) if good as others, but if you're looking for a way to give your iPod personality, iGuy is the man.

Price: \$35 Rating: B+/B-

Medicom iKub

Fun Accessories. The iPod's more than a music player - it's a way to relax and have fun no matter where you

are. Add-on makers are finally trying to make cute, funny iPod toys and cases; these are the best of them.

One of the most sought-after iPod collectibles in the U.S. is iKub, an iPod stand released only in Japan, and designed to match the classic look of white full-sized iPods Each iKub - named for the company's Kubrick action figures - comes with a tray to hold your iPod, slotted to permit connection of a Dock Connector cable, and a large posable Lego-like character. He can either stand or sit, and his arms lift your Pod a bit above ground level. Three iLounge editors have these, but we're not selling: look on eBay if your interest is piqued. Bear-shaped and colored iPod mini versions (ibe@r) were released later.

Price: \$50+ Rating: B+

Tiger Toys **i-Dog**

We're utter suckers for dogs, particularly ones that play nice with our iPods. i-Dog is just that sort of breed. His face and ears put on a motor-and-light show when music plays through the speaker in his belly, and simple artificial intelligence makes him "happy" if you play more music, "hungry" if you don't. Overall, he's a superior alternative to Zizzle's iZ (see you want to connect to iPods, and a better iPod toy value than most alternatives.

Price: \$30 Rating: B



report card iLounge Holiday Buyers' Guide

The iLounge Report Card. We've reviewed over 650 accessories and iPods since Apple's 2001 launch, using simple ratings as a summary. Our Report Card will give you a quick sweep of what's out there - read the comprehensive site reviews for more. And beware: 5G iPods and nanos may not work with some add-ons.

-							
Adapters and Cables		Compact Power Systems Cellboost	B+	ProClip In-Car Mount for iPod photo	A-	DLO TransPod (for original iPods)	B-
SendStation PocketDock Combo	Α	ezGear PowerStick Shuffle	B+	ProClip Padded iPod In-Car Holder	A-	DLO TransPod for iPod shuffle	B-
SendStation PocketDock	A-	Tekkeon myPower Battery Pack	B+	Griffin PodPod/iSqueez	B+	Monster iCharger	B-
SendStation PocketDock Line Out USB	A-	Belkin Backup Battery Pack	В	ProClip in-car holder for iPod	B+	SendStation smartCharge shuffle/USB	B-
Better Energy Systems Solio	B+	BTI AA iPod Battery	В	Pro Fit Ultimount	В	Belkin TuneBase FM	C+
Capdase Universal Power Adapter	B+	ezGear PowerStick iPod Battery Pack	В	Belkin TuneDok	B-	Dension ICE-Link 1.1 Auto Integration Kit	C+
Capdase USB Power Adapter/shuffle	B+	FastMac TruePower 4G	В	ProClip Padded w/ Tilt Swivel& Charging	B-	Digiana Audia X iTube-101 shuffle	C+
Global Source Retractable USB/FW	B+	Griffin TuneJuice BatteryPack	В	HandStands iGrip Sticky Pad	C-	Griffin RoadTrip All-in-One Car Solution	C+
Griffin Technology Dock400 Cable	B+	Nyko iBoost	В	,		Macally iPodCarCharger	D
Griffin Technology Dock800 Cable	B+	Nyko iBoost mini Battery Pack	В	Car Power Chargers, Kits and Adapter	'S	Gadget Accessories 3-in-1 Travel Charger	B+/F
Macally Link360 FireWire 1394A 3D	B+	Belkin TunePower	B-	Harman Kardon Drive + Play	Α-		
Macally Link360 USB 3D Adapter	B+	Compact Power Systems iRecharge	B-	TEN Technology FlexDock	A-	Cases - iPod 4G/color (Click Wheel)	
Nyko Stereo Link Cable	B+	Compact Power Systems iRecharge Value	C	Belkin Auto Kit	B+	Incase Multifunction Sport Case for iPod	Α
SendStation FireWire & Line Out	B+	Gadget Accessories Battery Pack	F	Belkin TuneBase FM Version 2	B+	STM Cocoon case	Α
XtremeMac Audio Kit for iPod shuffle	B+	,		BTI Auto/Air Adapter	B+	Vaja i-Volution 4G with Wheel Protector	Α
Apple iPod USB Power Adapter	В	Bluetooth Wireless		Dension ICE-Link Auto Integration Kit	B+	Otterbox Waterproof for iPod 4G/photo	A/A-
Macally Link360 FireWire 1394B 3D	В	TEN Technology naviPlay	A-	DLO TransPod FM (Boxy, Dock Conn.) V2	B+	Belkin NE Sports Leather Case for iPod	A-
Gadget Accessories USB Sync Cable	D	Belkin TuneStage for 4G/mini iPod	B+	iStore iPod2Car Line-Quality Integ. Kit	B+	Contour Design Showcase	A-
		Macally BlueWave Headset	B+	Monster iAirPlay Charger	B+	Handstands iPak/iSnug Set	A-
Audio/Video Cables		Bluetake I-Phono BT420EX	В	SiK imp in-car charger/line out	B+	iSkin eVo 2 with Wheel Cap	A-
Pacific Rim Technologies Retractable AV	B+	Logitech Wireless Headphones	B-	DLO TransPod FM Late 2005 (Rounded)	В	Lajo eXoflp	A-
Apple iPod AV Cable	В	d.Muse iBlue Bluetooth Phone Adapter	C-	DLO TransPod FM (Boxy, Dock Connector)	В	Marware CEO Classic 4G	A-
BoxWave iPod Photo AV miniSync	\subset			ezGear ezCharge for iPod shuffle	В	Marware SportSuit Convertible	A-
		Camera Adapters		Griffin PowerJolt USB Auto Charger	В	Marware TrailVue 4G	A-
Batteries		Apple iPod Camera Connector	B+	Griffin PowerPod FireWire Charger	В	Miyavix Kimono	A-
BTI's The iPod Battery	Α	Belkin Media Reader	B+	Incase Charger (Version 2)	В	OtterBox oPod 4G/photo	A-
FastMac TruePower 1G/2G	Α	Belkin Digital Camera Link	В	Macally USB iPod Car Charger	В	Speck Products ToughSkin	A-
Newer Technology NuPower Super 1G/20	ĴΑ			Monster Ultra Low Profile Charger	В	Sumo Cases Flap	A-
Apple iPod shuffle Battery Pack	A-	Car Mounts		Pacific Rim Technologies Car FW Adapter	В	Sumo Cases PlayThru Vertical 4G	A-
BTI's The iPod Battery ii	A-	ProClip Padded Adj. Holder w/ Tilt Swivel	Α	Belkin TuneBase	B-	Vaja iVod DJ	A-
FastMac TruePower 3G	A-	Nyko Universal Car Mount	A-	Belkin TuneBase for iPod shuffle	B-	Speck Products PortfolioSkin A-/	B+/C

As a fully independent resource of information on Apple Computer's iPods, iLounge (formerly iPodlounge) has provided impartial reviews of iPods and accessories since the 2001 release of the first-generation iPod. Because of a strict separation between the business and editorial sides of iLounge, and our strong belief in the value of an objective resource for iPod owners, our reviews are in no way influenced by advertising revenues or outside concerns. We have no ties to any manufacturer of iPod accessories. Please address any questions regarding our reviews to jeremy@ilounge.com.

Capdase USB Power DC Car Charger

Newer Technology NuPower Hi-Cap 3G A- Power Support Mobile Stand

iLounge Holiday Buyers' Guide report card

Body Glove Fusion Case iPod 4G	B+	Target/Aneta Genova Soundgear Sleeve	R	Speck Products ToughSkin mini	Α	Belkin Hard Case for iPod mini	В
Capdase Flip-Top Leather Case	B+	Timbuk2 iPod Carrying Case	В	STM Mini Cocoon Travel Case	A	Capdase Flip Top Leather Case	В
Core Cases/InnoPocket Magnum Case	B+	Tunewear Prie Hook	В	Tunewear Prie Classic Face Case	A	ezGear Clear mini Case	В
DLO Jam Jacket	B+	XtremeMac Silicone Sleeve	В	a.b. sutton Tokyo '64 Handmade Leather	A-	Global Source Deluxe Leather Case	В
ezGear Clear Case	B+	Speck Products SkinTight 4G iPod Skin	B/B-	a.b. sutton Mini Clutch Leather	A-	HotRomz Cases for iPod mini	В
H2O Audio SV-iP4G Underwater Housing		Apple iPod Socks	B-	Capdase Metal Case for iPod mini	A-	iLeath Mini Print Case	В
Incase Music Belt	B+	Be-Ez Travel Bag	B-	Contour Design iSee-mini	A-	Incase Handcrafted Leather Sleeve	В
Incase Neoprene Sleeve for iPod	B+	Boog Venom45 Case	B-	DLO Jam Jacket & Pro mini	A-	Innopocket Magnesium Case	В
Incase Wallet Fashion Case	B+	Chums Flip Case for iPod	B-	Handstands iPak/iSnug Set	A-	Kroo Executive Leather Cases	В
iSkin eVo 2	B+	Chums iFrame Case for iPod	B-	Incase Multifunction Sport Case	A-	Kroo Laguna Leather Cases	В
Lajo eXo 2 / eXo2fb	B+	DLO Jam Jacket Pro	B-	Incase Neoprene Sleeve for iPod mini	A-	Kroo Soho Leather Cases	В
LifePod Urban Camouflage ModPods	B+	Hook Casemandu iPod Travel Case	B-	iSkin mini	A-	Lime Mini Flip Case	В
Matias iPod Armor 4G	B+	Incase Leather Sleeves	B-	Kate Spade mini iPod Cases	A-	Marware Safari	В
Moshi/Aevoe iPouch	B+	Incase Pouch Fashion Case	B-	Lajo exo3mini	A-	Matias Clear iPod Armor mini	В
Pacific Rim Technologies 4gShield	B+	MCA Hautes Coutures Double Stitch	B-	Marware SportSuit Convertible	A-	Rivet iGrab mini with Lanyard or Clip	В
Power Support Silicone Jacket Set	B+	Pacific Design iPod Flip Case	B-	Marware TrailVue	A-	Sena Detachable Flip	В
Proporta Crystal Case	B+	Paul Frank iPod Cases	B-	Matias iPod Armor mini	A-	Slappa ShockShell	B-
Speck Products GripSkin 4G	B+	Power Support Crystal Jacket 4G	B-	Miyavix Kimono	A-	Speck Mini iStyle	В
Speck Products HandSkin	B+	Rivet iGrab with QR Belt Clip/Dash Mount	_	Pacific Design iPod Mini Flip Case	A-	Speck Mini Skin	В
Speck Products iGuy	B+	Speck Products iKitty for 4G iPod	B-	Power Support Crystal Jacket mini Set	A-	Targus Flip Case for iPod mini	В
Sumo Cases Quilted and Stripe	B+	Vaja Classic AP96 Leather Studded Case	B-	Speck Products Mini Arm Band	A-	Tunewear Icewear	В
Targus Flip Case for iPod	B+	Agent 18 Click Shield	C+	Speck Products GripSkin for iPod mini	A-	Burning Love Airpodz	B-
Targus Slide Case for iPod	B+	DLO Action Jacket 4G	C+	a.b. sutton Mini Slip Handmade Leather	B+	Capdase Soft Jacket	B-
Timbuk2 iPod Case	B+	Lajo eXo3	C+	a.b. sutton Mini Fastback Leather	B+	Chums iFrame Case for iPod mini	B-
Tunewear Icewear 4G	B+	Marware SportSuit Basic	C+	Agent 18 Mini Shield Case	B+	DC Shoes / Incase Sleeve	B-
Tunewear WaterWear 4G	B+	Mindknob Premium Glove Leather Case	C+	Agent 18 Mini Shock Case	B+	Gadget Accessories Aluminum Case	B-
Vaja iVod Crystal	B+	Pods Plus Leather Flipcase	C+	Belkin Leather Pouch for iPod mini	B+	Marware MetroVue mini	B-
Vaja iVod Rasta	B+	Acme Made The Traveller	C	Belkin NE Classic Leather Case for mini	B+	Speck Products iKitty for mini	B-
Speck Products 4G SkinTight Armband	B+/B	Lajo Zip4g b	C	Body Glove Fusion Case mini	B+	Timbuk2 iPod Mini Carrying Case	B-
Belkin NE Deluxe Leather Case for iPod	В	Lime iPod Peel Cases	C	Boog Venom mini Case	B+	Belkin Sports Jacket for iPod mini	C+
Belkin Neoprene Sport Case w/ Drawstrin		Lime Regular Peel Case for iPod	C	Eroch Lili mini Waterproof Case	B+	DLO Action Jacket mini case	C+
Burning Love Pouch for iPod	В	Mobile Juice Skin Art 4G	C	H2O Audio SV-iMini Underwater Case	B+	Krusell Music Multidapt for iPod mini	C+
Capdase Soft Jacket	В	PRM iDiddy Case/Lanyard/Earbuds 4G	C	Innopocket Metal Deluxe Case	B+	Lajo exomini	C+
DLO Relaxed Leather Cases	В	Target/Aneta Genova SoundGear Playthru		Lajo exo2mini	B+	Marware Basic	C+
Gadget Accessories Solid Cover Case	В	Belkin NE Leather Flip Case for iPod	C-	Lajo exo2mini-fb	B+	Marware Runabout	C+
HotRomz Cases for iPod	В	Belkin Sports Jacket for iPod 4G/20GB	C-	LifePod Urban Camouflage ModPod mini		Modus Design Dopi Cases	C+
Incase Folio for U2 Special Edition	В	Pacific Design Pouch	C-	Marware Santa	B+	RadTech Sleevz for iPod mini	C+
Incase Journal Fashion Case	В	Krusell Music Multidapt for iPod	D+/D-	MCA Hautes Coutures Snow for iPod min		Target/Aneta Genova Soundgear Playthru	
Incase Travel Kit	В	Gadget Accessories Aluminum Case	D	Moshi/Aevoe Mini iPouch	B+	Bird-Electron POCO	C
Lajo eXo / eXofb / eXo iPodArt	В		D	Speck Products iGuy for mini	B+		
Lajo eXo 3x	В	Cases - iPod mini		Speck Products Mini FlipStand	B+	Burning Love AirPodz for iPod mini	C-
Noreve Tradition Leather Case	В	Lajo exoflpmini	Α	Speck Products William Inpotation Speck Products PortfolioSkin for mini	B+	Proporta Crystal mini Case	C-/D-
Piel Frama Luxurious Leather Case	В	OtterBox for iPod mini Waterproof Case	А	Targus Slide Case for iPod mini	B+	Mobifly iPod mini Mobifly Kit	D+
RadTech Sleevz for iPod (4G/photo)	В	Power Support Square Type Sil. Jacket	Α	Tunewear WaterWear mini	B+	Tunewear Prie Hook mini	D-
Rivet iGrab	В	Vaja iVod mini	А	Vaja Classic case	B+	ranewear ric ricontinui	٥
THITCE IGIGO	D			vaja ciassic case	١ ت		

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Cases - iPod nano		Carada a Lauren Martal Cara	ρ.		D .	Cartain Darian if a
Incase Neoprene Sleeve for iPod nano	Α-	Capdase Luxury Metal Case Capdase Soft Jacket Value Set	B+ B+	Eroch Studios Lilipod Waterproof Case Gravis G-Pod	B+ B+	Contour Design iSee Groove Jacket
Incase Neoprene Sports Cases for nano	A-	Core Cases Aluminum Case	B+	iSkin eVo	B+	Marware SportSuit Sleeve
·				131111111111111111111111111111111111111		•
Apple Computer iPod nano Tubes	B+	Exopod Aluminum Magnetic Case	B+	Lajo eXo 2 Case Marware CEO Glove 3G	B+	Matias iPod Armor
Tunewear Prie Ambassador for iPod nanc		Griffin SiliSkins	B+		B+	Incase Designs Sleeve
A-1 Quality Products Nano iKeychain Cas		Griffin iVault	B+	Matias iPod Armor	B+	OP/TECH USA MP3i Pouch
Apple Computer iPod nano Armband	В	Macally IceSuit shuffle	B+	Otterbox oPod	B+	The Pouch MP3 Player Carrying Case
Belkin Folio Cases for iPod nano	В	Pacific Rim Technologies Gel Shield	B+	Speck Products iSport	B+	Vaja Classic Case
Incase Leather Folio for iPod nano	В	Pods Plus Crystal Case for iPod shuffle	B+	Teski Roadie Case	B+	Belkin iPod Case
iPodstreet Bifold Leather Cases for nano	В	Speck Connect & Protect for iPod shuffle	B+	Incase Sleeve 3G Case	В	NeoPod Neoprene Case
Pods Plus iPod Nano Skin	В	Speck Metal iPod Protection	B+	Lajo eXo and eXo Inferno Cases	В	Speck Products FlipStand
Speck Products nano Grass FunSkin	В	Vaja AP11 for iPod shuffle	B+	Lajo eXo 3	В	Xigma Leather Case
Tunewear Prie TuneWallet for iPod nano	В	A.B. Sutton Kidskin Case for iPod shuffle	В	Monster iCase Travel Pack	В	Krusell Handit Case
Vaja Classic AP161	В	HotRomz Cases for iPod shuffle	В	Power Support Silicone Jacket Set	В	OWC Pod Protector
Belkin Flip for iPod nano	B-	Incase Pouch - Multipurpose Version	В	RadTech PodSleevz	В	Willow Design BiFold Case
Speck Products nano Cloud FunSkin	B-	MCA Hautes Coutures Snow Case	В	Piel Frama Leather Case	В	Cassette Tape Adapters
Speck Products nano iGuy	B-	Miyavix/Power Support Kimono Case	В	Speck Products FlipStand 3G	В	Griffin SmartDeck Intelligent Adapter 4G
Tunewear Prie TuneTag for iPod nano	B-	MP3Band-It Armband (1.5"Version)	В	Terforma iSleeve G2	В	Sony CPA-9C Car Connecting Pack
Vaja Classic AP171	B-	PodGear JumpSuit Shuffle	В	Teski Executive Leather Case	В	XtremeMac iPod Cassette Adapter V2
iPodstreet Horizontal Encased Leather	C+	Belkin NE Classic Leather Case	B-	iLeath Leather Print Case	B-	·
iPodstreet Jacket Leather Case	C+	DLO Jam Jackets and Caps	B-	Speck Products iPod Skin	B-	Monster iCarPlay Cassette Adapter XtremeMac iPod Cassette Adapter
iPodstreet Jacket with Trim Leather Case	C+	Incase Neoprene Wristband for iPod shuff	fle B−	CaseClosed iPod Cases	C+	·
Noreve Tradition for iPod nano	C+	XtremeMac SportWrap for iPod shuffle	B-	MacAlly PodCase Armband	C+	Belkin Mobile Cassette Adapter
Proporta Protective Silicone Case for nand	o C+	Incase Pouch - Five-Pack Version	C+	JAVOedge Design 1	C	Coby CA-747 Dual Position Adapter
Belkin Carabineer for iPod nano	C	Pods Plus Leather Cases	C+	Tune Belt iPod Armband Carrier	C-	CD Ripping Services
Incase Leather Wallet for iPod nano	C-	Belkin Sports Jacket 3-Pack for iPod shuffl	e C	Monster iSportCase	D+	RipShark
iPodstreet Thong Leather Case for nano	C-	PRM iDiddy Case/Lanyard/Earbuds shuffle	e C	Proporta Aluminum iPod Case	D-	Moondog Digital
		MP3 Band-It (1.0"Version)	C-	·		Ready to Play
Cases - iPod shuffle	٨	Pods Plus Silicone Skins for iPod shuffle	C-	Cases - 1G & 2G iPods (no Dock Conne		RipDigital
Apple iPod shuffle Sport Case	A	Kroo Soho Leather Case for iPod shuffle	D+	Incase Pouch	A	dmp3 Music
iSkin Shuffle Duo for iPod shuffle	A	Speck SkinTight Armband for iPod shuffle	D-	Marware C.E.O Classic Case	A	MusicRip
TuneWear Icewear Shuffle	A			Marware SportSuit Convertible	A	Classes O Dalishas
Body Glove Fusion Case shuffle	Α-	Cases - 3G iPod (with Dock Connector	-	Vaja i-Vod	A	Cleaners & Polishes
DLO Action Jacket for iPod shuffle	A-	Contour Design Showcase	Α	XtremeMac Deluxe (New & Improved)	Α	Radtech Ice Creme (Version 2)
iMojo shuffle Sweats	Α-	Lajo eXoflp	Α	iGlove Leather Case	A-	iCleaner
OtterBox for iPod shuffle	A-	Marware C.E.O. Classic 3G	Α	J.R. Hill & Co. iPod Sleeve Deluxe	A-	Radtech Ice Crème (Version 1)
Power Support Silicone Jacket Shuffle	Α-	STM Cocoon case	Α	Krusell Classic Case	A-	
XtremeMac TuffWrapz	A-	Vaja i-Vod 3G	Α	Waterfield Designs Sooper Dooper	A-	Clips and Cord Managers
Agent 18 Shield 4 Shuffle Packs	B+	iSkin eXo2 Case	A-	XtremeMac Deluxe (Original)	A-	BlueLounge cableyoyo
Apple iPod shuffle Armband	B+	Self Design BodyMask	A-			Audio Outfitters earPod Earbud Case

Review grades are provided only as a convenient summary of the comprehensive reviews we publish online. The complete archive of reviews for all of the products above is available on our Reviews page (ilounge.com/index.php/reviews/). We also spotlight new reviews on our main page several times each week, and with only limited exceptions, make an effort to review products by as many different accessory makers as possible.

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Newer Technology RoadTrip!

Sumajin SmartWrap Cord Manager Apple iPod mini Lanyard Lajo TwistClips Power Support Cord Gatherer Tunewear TuneClip Hook Industries BudFrog	B B- B- C D+	Headphones & In-Canal Earphones AKG k701 Reference Headphones Etymotic Research ER-4S Earphones Etymotic ER-6i Isolator Earphones Sony MDR-EX81 Earphones Ultimate Ears UE5c Custom Earphones
Clips and Guards - iPod shuffle DLO Flip Clip for iPod shuffle DVforge The Clips for iPod shuffle Bruddy ShuffleMate Marware Sport Grip for iPod shuffle XtremeMac Shieldz Rivet Grab for iPod shuffle Tunewear Aluminum ClipWear shuffle XtremeMac SuperClip XtremeMac SuperHook Griffin TuneCaps JP's Clip + Armband for iPod Shuffle XtremeMac Bumperz RadTech ClearClip for shuffle ShuffleClip by ShuffleClip	B+ B+ B B B- B- B- B- C+ C+ C+	Bose QuietComfort 2 Noise Canceling Sennheiser MX500 Sennheiser PMX60 Shure E5c Earphones Sony Fontopia MDR-EX70/71LP Sony MDR-E888LP Fontopia Earphones Ultimate Ears super.fi 5 EB Ultimate Ears super.fi 5 Pro Ultimate Ears UE-10 Pro Earphones Yahba Opus Earphones Altec Lansing iM616 Altec Lansing iM716 Audio-Technica ATH-CM3 Earphones Design Annex iBeat Illuminating Phones ezGear ezEars SX50 Earphones
FM Radio Receivers Griffin iFM Radio/Remote/Recorder-4G DLO mini fm Radio and Amplifier for mini BTI The iPod Tunestir 3-in-1	A/B+ A- B-	Future Sonics Ears Model EM3 Earphones Headbanger Audio Ear Subs Earphones Shure E2c Earphones Shure E4c Sound Isolating Earphones XtremeMac F51 High Definition
FM Transmitters XtremeMac AirPlay FM Transmitter Griffin iTrip with LCD for iPod 4G/mini Griffin iTrip Griffin iTrip mini Kensington Digital FM Trans./Auto Charg. Belkin TuneCast II FM Transmitter C. Crane FM Transmitter Newer Technology RoadTrip! 87.9 FM Newer Technology RoadTrip! (Plus) Tekkeon myPower FM Transmitter Monster iCarPlay FM Transmitter Dr. Bott iPod Connection Kit w/ FM Trans. Irock! Wireless Music Adapter XtremeMac AirPlay for iPod shuffle Sonnet Podfreq FM Transmitter	A A/A-A-A-B+B+B-C+C-C-C-D+	Altec Lansing inMotion iM202 Earphones Apple iPod In-Ear Headphones Macally Noise Reduction Headphones Mophie Song Sling Retractable Lanyard Sennheiser PX200 Shure E3c Earphones Apple iPod nano Lanyard Headphones Logitech Curve Headphones Griffin EarJams Macally Retractable Headphones HeadRoom iPod Earphone System Plane Quiet Noise Reducing Headset Altec Lansing iM302 Headphones Pacific Rim Tech shuffle Accessory Kit JAVOedge retractable earbuds

Headphone Expanders Macally PodDuo Headphone Adapter Monster iSplitter XtremeMac Audio Splitter XtremeMac Audio Splitter for shuffle (V2) Simpl Acoustics A1 Audio Amplifier Upbeat Audio Boosteroo Revolution XtremeMac Audio Splitter for shuffle (V1)	A- A- B+ B+ C
iPods and iTunes Phones Apple 2G iPod 20GB Mac Apple 3G iPod 15GB Apple Color iPod U2 Special Edition Apple Color 4G iPod 20/60GB Apple 2G iPod 10GB PC Apple 4G iPod: For New iPod Users Apple iPod from HP for New iPod Users Apple iPod shuffle for New iPod Users Apple iPod soutfle for New iPod Users Apple iPod soutfle for New iPod Users Apple iPod from HP for New iPod Users Apple iPod onano (2GB/4GB) Apple iPod 5G with Video (30GB/60GB) Apple iPod from HP for Power Users Apple iPod mini 1G: For All Users Apple iPod mini 2G: For All Users Apple iPod Shuffle for Power Users Motorola ROKR E1 iTunes Mobile Phone	A A A A A A A A A A A A A A A B B B B B
iPod Hardware Expanders - General Griffin RadioSHARK Apple AirPort Express Griffin iBeam DVforge JamPod Audio Mixer Microphones & Microphone Adapters Griffin iTalk Griffin iTalk (2) Voice Recorder Belkin TuneTalk Microphone Belkin Voice Recorder DLO VoiceNote Voice Recorder Griffin Lapel Mic Stereo Microphone Belkin Universal Microphone Adapter	A- B+ B C A- A- B B- B- C+
	B-

report card

Remote Controls	
ABT iJet Wireless RF Remote 3G/4G/mini	1
Griffin AirClick Wireless RF 3G/4G/mini	1
Targus RemoteTunes Wireless 3G/4G/mini	1
Apple Remote 3G/4G/mini	E
Engineered Audio RemoteRemote 2 RF	[
TEN Technology naviPro EX 3G/4G/mini	[
Apple Computer Apple Remote	[
Nyko iTop Button Relocator 3G/4G	[
TEN Technology naviPod 3G/4G/mini	[
DLO iDirect Wireless Remote 3G/4G/mini	(
Software	
Ratajik StationRipper	/
Griffin iFill	/
Talking Panda iBar	/
Migo Personal for iPod	[
Talking Panda iLingo Translation Software	[
Speakers	
Altec Lansing FX6021 2.1 Speakers	/
JBL Creature II 2.1 System	/
Pacific Rim Cube Travel Speakers	/
Altec Lansing inMotion iM7	/
Altec Lansing iMmini	/
Harman Soundsticks II 2.1 Speaker System	A
iHome IH5 Docking Stereo Clock Radio	/
JBL Encounter 2.1 Speakers	/
JBL On Tour	/
Logic 3 i-Station Shuffle	/
Logitech mm50 Portable Speakers	/
Macally PodWave	/
PodGear PocketParty	/
Altec Lansing iM3	[
Bose SoundDock	[
Elecom ASP-700i Speakers	[
JBL On Stage	[
JBL On Stage II	[
Klipsch iFi Speaker System	-
Logic3 i-Station Portable Speakers	[
Macally IceTune	-
Sonic Impact i-Fusion Portable System	[
Tivoli iPAL	[
ALTAC L ANGING INMANTON	ı

Ignitek iCarrier

Klipsch iGroove All-in-One

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Logitech mm22 Portable PodGear Shuffle Station Tiger Toys/Hasbro i-Dog Interactive Griffin Technology TuneBox for shuffle Ignitek iCruiser Speaker System Mythix iChant Portable Active Speaker Oregon Scientific iBall Wireless Speaker Sharper Image iSphere Techwiz Innovations Musak Bag Ignitek iCheer Speakers PodGear PocketParty Shuffle Sharper Image iPulse Monster iSpeaker Portable DLO iBoom (Version 2) DLO iBoom (Version 1) Stands (Docks & Cradles) Kensington Stereo Dock for iPod Pacific Rim Technologies Shuffle Cradle A-Power Support Metal Gear Stand Thought Out iPed 2 Adjustable Stand Apple Computer Universal Dock Belkin Hi-Speed USB 2.0 4-Port Hub Medicom iKub Stand for iPod ModPod Power Support Swivel Fix Stand Sonance iPort In-Wall Docking System Thought Out iPed Shuffle Dock Apple Dock (for Dock Connector iPods) Apple iPod nano Dock Apple iPod shuffle Dock Atech Flash iDuo Bubble Design Habitat DLO Flexible Dock for iPod shuffle DLO HomeDock for iPod Pacific Rim Technologies iCradle PlasticSmith tux upright Stand for iPod PodHolder PodStand Pressure Drop DecoDock for iPod shuffle B Speck Products Shuffle Dock Westshore Craftworks iDockCover

Stickers, Guards, and Film

iSkin Wheel Cap

SkinEFX iPod Stickers

Frontfield iPoDonut Wheel Protector

Power Support Crystal Film Screen Prot.
Power Support 3D Wheel Film
A-Tunewear Poptune for iPod shuffle
InvisibleShield Full for iPod nano
B+JAVOScreen
Power Support Crystal Film for iPod nano
B+Hewlett-Packard Printable Tattoos
Power Support Wheel Film
B-MacSkinz Podskinz
Shufflesome Stickers for iPod shuffle
Tatuz International Tatuz for iPod shuffle
Mobile Juice Shuffle Art
RadTech Portectorz for Dock Connector
Tunewear Poptune Stickers for iPod mini
B-

New reviews are added to iLounge nearly every weekday, so if you're looking for an iPod accessory that's not on this list, check out the individual category listings on our Review Ratings page at ilounge.com/index.php/reviews/review_grades/for the latest additions. We focus on recent and upcoming products for current iPod models.

Capdase SkinGuard Stickers for shuffle C

Understanding Our Ratings: Here's how our letter grades aren't like the ones you received in school.

A grades are awarded to only the very best products - ones that we **highly**recommend. We've awarded 41 unqualified flat A grades since we started the site in
2001 - currently the top 6.25% of all products, and ones that we think are superb across
the board. An A- grade indicates one or two small deficiencies that limit a product's
universal appeal. What about A+? Even the original iPod didn't receive an A+ grade from iLounge.
We haven't awarded one yet, and may never do so.

B+ and B grades are awarded to very good and good products - ones that we **recommend** to large but specific audiences. At the flat B level, we consider a product to be one that we would tell our friends are worth considering, with some modest caveats. A B- grade indicates a product that has a few medium to large issues that crimp its appeal, and qualifies for our **limited recommendation**. We recommend a B- product only to a niche of people who really need its functionality.

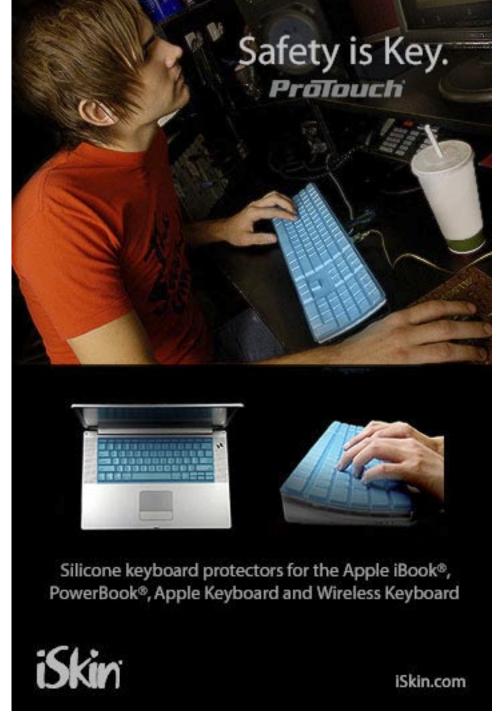
C graded products are "okay" ones that **we neither recommend nor dislike**. They perform all of their stated functions acceptably, but may not be attractively designed, well thought out, or appropriately priced. A C+ grade indicates that the product was a little bit better than okay, but still not "good" or "recommendable." The C- grade indicates that the product was on the edge of being bad, and though it worked substantially as promised, possessed some serious design issues.

D graded products are ones that we **actively disliked** for some reason. This doesn't happen often, and it has nothing to do with the manufacturer or vendor except for the choices made in designing and selling the product. Typically, the reason is that the product possessed such substantially below- average design, performance or pricing that it was nearly laughable by comparison to other available offerings.

Under iLounge's policy on defective and dangerous products, any product graded with a D- was **defective** in some substantial way when we tested it, or subsequently revealed to be defective based on substantial reader input or manufacturer admission. Since most of the products we review are from major manufacturers who test their products prior to shipments, relatively few products qualify for this rating. However, problem products continue to slip through the cracks, so be careful.

F graded products were **potentially dangerous** when we tested them. Under our policy on defective and dangerous products, we only award a grade of F if a product contains a defect that could seriously damage itself, the attached iPod, or the purchaser. Examples of products that have received F grades include power chargers that do not properly regulate power going to the iPod's electronic components, and a stereo that could burst its batteries when connected to both battery and AC power. For obvious reasons, not many iPod accessories quality for F ratings.





DVBaseLtd DVBase

JP's/Pods Plus Charger/Hotsync shuffle

PlasticSmith tux tlt Stand for iPod

iLounge **Photo and Art Contests**



First Winning Entry Graeme Smith Prize: One 2GB iPod nano, Winner's Choice of Colors



Second Winning Entry Christopher Mercurio Prize: One 2GB iPod nano, Winner's Choice of Colors

Buyers' Guide Contest Black & White Photos Winners

In order to celebrate the launch of the black- and white-bodied iPod nanos, we created a black and white photo contest. Photographs had to be original, include or in some smart way reference an iPod, and be in black and white. Digital editing was not allowed other than to crop, adjust brightness, and adjust contrast. The entries we received were nothing short of magnificent - picking winners was truly more difficult here than with any other contest we've run in the past.

















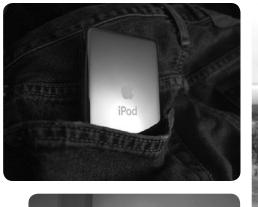
















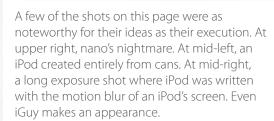














Besides some amazing portraits, there were many photographs that used texture, reflection, perspective and humor to their advantage. These are just some of the ones that we were impressed by - many, many others are in our Galleries.











Best Creative Entry Best Entry Overall

Alfredo Jose Richner

iMatch Bluetooth Matchmaking System Prize: Oregon Scientific iBall and The Ultimate iPod Accessory Bundle by Belkin



Buyers' Guide Contest Design The Ultimate iPod Accessory Winners and Honorable Mentions

The rules were simple: "use your creativity and other skills to design the ultimate iPod accessory." In order to keep the contest lively and fun, we created three categories: Best Creative Entry, Best Realistic/Practical Entry, and Best Funny Entry. The best entry taken from the entire pool won a huge prize pack worth \$855, while the other top two entries each won prizes worth \$300.



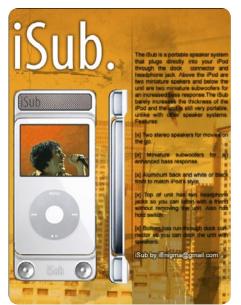
Best Realistic/Practical Entry Mike Cordeiro iSnap Digital Still Camera Prize: Oregon Scientific iBall

















"Create an iPod add-on that looks really sharp and would be very likely to be produced." These were some of our favorite submissions.





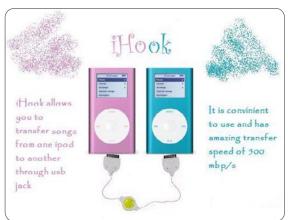
Thze, oregon sele

The world's first iPod-based digital 4-track





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Creative Entries:

"Come up with a smart iPod add-on that is original and worthwhile." These didn't need to be practical, just cool.

PodStudio is a digital mixing board that takes advantage of the new 5G iPod's stereo recording capabilities. iHook is a cable to connect iPods to each other for music sharing, iBase is a printing and CD/VCD burning station for iPods. iChannel is a TV tuner for the 5G iPod. iZoom is a mini camera that lets you use an iPod as a digital magnifying glass. iSpeech records your text and turns it into text files. iProjector is a mini photo slideshow projector. The shuffle Remote turns any iPod shuffle into an iPod remote control.



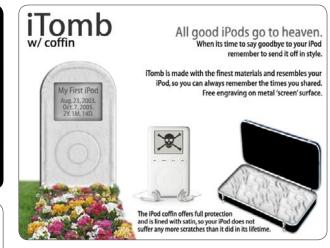












Funny Entries:

"Create an iPod add-on that makes people laugh. Use good taste."

Most of the entries we received were funnier to read than to look at, but there were a few good ones. iShave is the seamless integration of iPod and electric razor, iCut is a miniature chainsaw for iPods, and iPepperSpray is, well, a way to ward people off. Unfortunately, none of these add-ons is compatible with the 5G iPod or nano. But iTomb - a casket for your dead iPod - is, as are the i2nd-Chance heart resuscitator and iBean coffee maker.



the iPod directory

iLounge Holiday Buyers' Guide

Whether you're looking for the contact information for an iPod accessory maker or places that offer iPod-related services, start with The iPod Directory - all the key players are listed here, and easy to find.

Adapter/Cable Manufacturers	94
Battery Manufacturers	94
Battery Replacement Services	95
Car Accessory Manufacturers	95
Case & Clip Manufacturers	96
CD Ripping Services	98
Cleaner / Polish Manufacturers	98
Customizing Services	98
FM Transmitter Manufacturers	98
Head/Earphone Manufacturers	99
Pod/iTunes Hardware Manufacturers	99
Remote Manufacturers	99
Repair Services	99
Software Developers (iPod)	99
Software Developers (Mac)	100
Software Developers (PC)	100
Speaker & Mic Manufacturers	100
Stand & Mount Manufacturers	100

Adapter/Cable Manufacturers

Audio Outfitters

http://www.audio-outfitters.com/ (800) 780-IPOD CustomerService@audio-outfitters.com

3elkin

http://www.belkin.com/ (800) 223-5546 ex 2263 techsupp@belkin.com

Bluelounge

http://www.bluelounge.com/ (626) 564-2802 mail@bluelounge.com

BoxWave

http://www.boxwave.com/ customerservice@boxwave.com

Brando Workshop

http://shop.brando.com.hk/brando@brando.com.hk

CompuCable

http://www.compucable.com/ (800) 344-6921 support@addlogix.com

Digital Age Products

http://www.digitalageproducts.com/ (888) 716-6395 info@digitalageproducts.com

Griffin Technology

http://www.griffintechnology.com/ (615) 399-7000 support@griffintechnology.com

Kensington

http://www.kensington.com/ (650) 572-2700

Macally

http://www.macally.com/ (626) 338-8787 info@macally.com

Monster Cable Products, Inc.

http://www.monstercable.com/ (415) 840-2000

Newer Technology

http://www.newertech.com/ (800) 275-4576 sales@newertech.com

Nyko

http://www.nyko.com/ (888) 444-NYKO customersupport@nyko.com

Pacific Rim Technologies

http://www.pacrimtechnologies.com/ (949) 481-2443 info@pacrimtechnologies.com

PodGear

http://www.podgear.net/ +44 (0) 1494 522 721 info@disruptivegroup.com

SendStation

http://www.sendstation.com/ +49 (69)-94413841 info@sendstation.com

SiK

http://www.sik.com/ (650) 701-1745 info@sik.com

Sonnet Tech

http://www.podfreq.com/ (949) 472-2772 support@sonnettech.com

Tunewear

http://www.tunewear.com/info@tunewear.com

XtremeMac

http://www.xtrememac.com/ (954) 385-9877 support@xtrememac.com

Battery Manufacturers

Audio Outfitters

http://www.audio-outfitters.com/ (800) 780-IPOD CustomerService@audio-outfitters.com

Battery Technology, Inc. (BTI)

http://www.batterytech.com/ (626) 336-6878 info@batterytech.com

Belkin

http://www.belkin.com/ (800) 223-5546 ex 2263 techsupp@belkin.com

Better Energy Systems

http://www.solio.com/ solio@betterenergy.co.uk

Compact Power Systems, LLC

http://www.cpsyst.com (800) 833-1070 customerservice@cpsyst.com

FastMac

http://www.fastmac.com/ (408) 850-6232 support@fastmac.com

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iPodResO

http://www.ipodresq.com/ (877) POD-REPA info@ipodresq.com

Maxell

http://www.maxell-usa.com/ (800) 533-2836 techsupp@maxell.com

Newer Technology

http://www.newertech.com/ (800) 275-4576 sales@newertech.com

yko

http://www.nyko.com/ (888) 444-NYKO customersupport@nyko.com

PDASmart

http://www.pdasmart.com/ (512) 258-4500 info@PDASmart.com

TechRestore, Inc.

http://techrestore.com/ (866) 967-3786 help@techrestore.com

Tekkeon

http://www.tekkeon.com/ (888) 787-5888 Support@Tekkeon.com

Battery Replacement Services

FastMac

http://www.fastmac.com/ (408) 850-6232 support@fastmac.com

iPodMechanic

http://ipodmechanic.com/ (877) 726-0608 info@ipodmechanic.com

iPodMods

http://www.ipodmods.com/ (888) 763-6637 sales@ipodmods.com

iPodResQ

http://www.ipodresq.com/ (877) POD-REPA info@ipodresq.com

iPodRestore

http://ipod.techrestore.com/ (877) FOR-IPOD help@techrestore.com

Other World Computing

http://eshop.macsales.com/ (800) 275-4576

TechRestore, Inc.

http://techrestore.com/ (866) 967-3786 help@techrestore.com

UKiPodRepairs

http://www.ukipodrepairs.co.uk/info@ukipodrepairs.co.uk

Car Accessory Manufacturers

iLounge reserves the right to exclude any business from this listing at any time if, in iLounge's sole judgment,

practices. However, omission from this list may be inadvertant or for other reasons, and should not be construed

such business has engaged in practices in violation of our Policy on Harmful Accessories, or other deceptive

as a judgment against any omitted company. The most recent iPod Directory is available on iLounge.com.

Alpine Electronics of America, Inc http://www.alpine-usa.com/ (310) 326.8000

Audiovox

http://www.audiovox.com/ (631) 231-7750

Belkin

http://www.belkin.com/ (800) 223-5546 ex 2263 techsupp@belkin.com

Brando Workshop

http://shop.brando.com.hk/brando@brando.com.hk

Clarion Corp. of America

http://www.clarion.com/usa/ (800) GO-CLARION (462-5274)

Dension USA

http://www.densionusa.com (866) 822-3673 info@densionusa.com

Digital Age Products

http://www.digitalageproducts.com/ (888) 716-6395 info@digitalageproducts.com

Digital Lifestyle Outfitters

http://www.dlodirect.com/ (800) 866-IPOD customerservice@everythingipod.com

Griffin Technology

http://www.griffintechnology.com/ (615) 399-7000 support@griffintechnology.com

Hebe Styling

http://www.hebestyling.com/ +44 (0)1132 892 637 info@hebestyling.com

Kensington

http://www.kensington.com/ (650) 572-2700

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Macally

http://www.macally.com/ (626) 338-8787 info@macally.com

Monster Cable Products, Inc.

http://www.monstercable.com/ (415) 840-2000

Neo Car Audio

http://www.neocaraudio.com/ (858) 689-4141 sales@neocaraudio.com

Newer Technology

http://www.newertech.com/ (800) 275-4576 sales@newertech.com

Nyko

http://www.nyko.com/ (888) 444-NYKO customersupport@nyko.com

Pacific Rim Technologies

http://www.pacrimtechnologies.com/ (949) 481-2443 info@pacrimtechnologies.com

Peripheral Electronics

http://peripheralelectronics.com/ (727) 572-9255 Support@peripheralelectronics.com

Pioneer Electronics Inc

http://www.pioneerelectronics.com E:mail page: http://www.pioneerelectronics. com/pna/contact/us/0,,2076_4351,00.html

PodGear

http://www.podgear.net/ +44 (0) 1494 522 721 info@disruptivegroup.com

The iPod Directory is the first comprehensive listing of major providers of iPod-related goods and services, located around the world. We have attempted to include as many companies as possible in the Directory, and do not require advertising or other editorial participation in order to add a qualified business name to this list. If you are the owner of a business and wish to submit or update information for this list, please visit ilounge.com/directory/.

ProClip

http://www.proclipusa.com/ (800) 296-3212 support@proclipusa.com

Pro-Fit International, Inc.

http://www.pro-fit-intl.com/ (800) 388-0073 sales@pro-fit-intl.com

Scosche Industries

http://www.scosche.com/ (800) 363-4490 sales@scosche.com

SiK

http://www.sik.com/ (650) 701-1745 info@sik.com

Sonnet Tech

http://www.podfreq.com/ (949) 472-2772 support@sonnettech.com

Tekkeon

http://www.tekkeon.com/ (888) 787-5888 Support@Tekkeon.com

TEN Technology

http://www.tentechnology.com/ (800) 518-4TEN info@tentechnology.com

XtremeMac

http://www.xtrememac.com/ (954) 385-9877 support@xtrememac.com

Case & Clip Manufacturers

A.B. Sutton

http://www.absutton.com/ help@absutton.com

Acme Made

http://www.acmemade.com/ (888) 486-3191 info@acmemade.com

Agent18

http://www.agent18.com/ questions@agent18.com

Aneta Genova, Inc.

http://www.anetagenova.com/ (212) 965-1089 info@anetagenova.com

Apple

http://www.apple.com/ (800) 275-2273

Arty

http://wrappers.typepad.com/arty/debbieabroad@aol.com

Audio Outfitters

http://www.audio-outfitters.com/ (800) 780-IPOD CustomerService@audio-outfitters.com

Belkin

http://www.belkin.com/ (800) 223-5546 ex 2263 techsupp@belkin.com

Booq, LLC.

http://www.booqbags.com/ (626) 836-9365

BoxWave

http://www.boxwave.com/customerservice@boxwave.com

Brando Workshop

http://shop.brando.com.hk/brando@brando.com.hk

Bruddy, LLC.

http://www.bruddy.com/info@bruddy.com

Budfrog (Hook Industries, LLC.)

http://budfrog.com/info@budfrog.com

Burberry

http://www.burberry.com/ (866) 589-0499

Burning Love

http://www.burninglove.biz/

Burton Snowboards

http://www.burton.com/ (800) 881-3138 info@burton.com

Capdase

http://www.capdase.com/ (852) 2191 2173 info@capdase.com

Case Closed Bags, Inc.

http://www.caseclosedbags.com/ (866) 366-0913 april@caseclosedbags.com

Chums, Inc.

http://www.chums.com/ (800) 222-CHUM

Coach

http://www.coach.com/ (800) 444-3611

Contour Design, Inc.

http://contourdesign.com/ (800) 462-6678 info@contourdesign.com

Crumpler Bags

www.crumplerbags.com (718) 384-3020 mail@crumplerbags.com

Digital Lifestyle Outfitters

http://www.dlodirect.com/ (800) 866-IPOD customerservice@everythingipod.com

Dior Homme

http://fashion.dior.com/homme/

E&B Company

http://www.ebcases.com/ (858) 385-1976 cs@ebcases.com

Eroch Studios

http://www.lilipods.com/info@lilipods.com

FeltCafe

http://www.feltcafe.net/ liz@feltcafe.net

Fossil, Inc.

http://www.fossil.com/ (972) 234-2525 webguy@fossil.com

Geek Culture

http://www.geekculture.com/ orders@geekculture.com

Griffin Technology

http://www.griffintechnology.com/ (615) 399-7000 support@griffintechnology.com

Gucci

http://www.gucci.com/

H2O Audio

http://www.h2oaudio.com/ (858) 623-0339 x213 support@h2oaudio.com

handmade.kerstinberg.com

http://handmade.kerstinberg.com handmade@kerstinberg.com

HipTunes (Genre Collection, LLC.)

http://www.genrecollection.com/ (866) 436-7363 mail@genrecollection.com

Hotromz

http://www.hotromz.com/ support@hotromz.com

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iMojo

http://www.imojo.com/ service@imojo.com

Incase Designs Corporation

http://www.goincase.com/ (626) 338-6400 x 13 info@goincase.com

Innopocket

http://www.innopocket.com/ (852) 2406-0638 info@innopocket.com

iPoDonut

http://www.ipodonut.com/ esupport@iPoDonut.com

iRock

http://www.myirock.com/ (847) 202-1900 info@fidinc.com

iSkin

http://www.iskin.com/ (416) 924-9607 inquire@iskin.com

J.Crew

http://www.jcrew.com/ (800) 562-0258 contactus@jcrew.com

JAVOEdge Intl, LLC.

http://www.javoedge.com/info@javoedge.com

JR Hill & Co.

http://www.jrhillandcompany.com/ (800) 258-3654 contact@jrhillandcompany.com

Kate Spade

http://www.katespade.com/ (866) 999-KATE

Kensington

http://www.kensington.com/ (650) 572-2700

Krusell

http://www.krusell.se +46-31-338 00 00 info@krusell.se

LifePod

http://www.lifepod.net/ (888) LIFEPOD salespod@lifepod.net

Louis Vuitton

http://www.vuitton.com/ 866.V.U.I.T.T.O.N

Macally

http://www.macally.com/ (626) 338-8787 info@macally.com

MacSkinz

http://www.macskinz.com/

Marware, Inc.

http://www.marware.com/ (954) 927-6031 info@marware.com

Matias Corporation

http://matias.ca/ (905) 265-8844 info@matias.ca

Maxell

http://www.maxell-usa.com/ (800) 533-2836 techsupp@maxell.com

Monster Cable Products, Inc.

http://www.monstercable.com/ (415) 840-2000

Noreve

http://www.noreve.com/info@noreve.com

Nyko

http://www.nyko.com/ (888) 444-NYKO customersupport@nyko.com

Ocean Trust Companies

http://ipockets.net/ (954) 427-6125 mosborn@oceantrustcompanies.com

Otter Products, LLC.

http://www.otterbox.com/ (888) 695-8820 customerservice@otterbox.com

Paag

http://www.paagpak.com/customersupport@paagpak.com

Pacific Accessory Corp.

http://www.pac-audio.com/ (714)835-3022

Pacific Design Ltd.

http://www.pacificdesign.com/ 888-797-8755 info@pacificdesign.com

Pacific Rim Technologies

http://www.pacrimtechnologies.com/ (949) 481-2443 info@pacrimtechnologies.com

Paul Smith

http://www.paulsmith.co.uk (44) 207 836 7828 info@paulsmith.co.uk

PDair Workshop

http://www.pdair.com/enquiry@pdair.com

Piel Frama

http://www.pielframa.com/ +34 956 46 12 55 info@pielframa.com

Pixelgirlshop

http://www.pixelgirlshop.com/ (734) 929-9603 pixelgirl@pixelgirlshop.com

PodGear

http://www.podgear.net/ +44 (0) 1494 522 721 info@disruptivegroup.com

PodShirt

http://podshirt.com/info@PodBrix.com

Power Support (USA), Inc.

http://www.powersupportusa.com/ (818) 558-1645 CustomerService@ PowerSupportUSA.com

Proporta

http://www.proporta.com/ (888) 331-0803 sales@proporta.com

Pyrim Technologies

http://www.pyrim.com/ (469) 366-4440 support@pyrim.com

RadTech, LLC.

http://www.radtech.us/ (314) 209-9993 info@radtech.us

Rhinoskin

http://www.saunders-usa.com/ (800) 341-4674 csr@saunders-usa.com

Scosche Industries

http://www.scosche.com/ (800) 363-4490 sales@scosche.com

Sena Cases

http://www.senacases.com/

Speck Products

http://www.speckproducts.com/ (650) 463-8914 info@speckproducts.com

Target

http://www.target.com/ (612) 304-6073 Guest.Relations@target.com

Targus Group International, Inc.

http://www.targus.com/ (877) 482-7487

Tatuz International, LLC.

http://www.shuffletatu.com/ (314) 724-2224 info@tatuz.com

Terforma

http://www.terforma.com/ (866) TER-FORM info@terforma.com

Teski

http://www.teski.com/ (972) 333-0964 sam@teski.com

Timbuk2

http://www.timbuk2.com/ customerservice@timbuk2.com

Tunewear

http://www.tunewear.com/ info@tunewear.com

Vaja Cases

http://www.vajacases.com/ info@vajacases.com

Waterfield Designs

http://www.sfbags.com/ (877) 546-1040 askgary@sfbags.com

XtremeMac

http://www.xtrememac.com/ (954) 385-9877 support@xtrememac.com

Yoshida Kaban

(03) 3862 - 1021 www.yoshidakaban.com

CD Ripping Services

Awaken Solutions, LLC.

http://www.awaken.com/ (877) 385-2076 info@awaken.com

dmp3Music

http://www.dmp3music.com/ (415) 601-3156 daniel@dmp3music.com

Get Digital, Inc.

http://www.getdigitalinc.com/ (800) 714-4744 info@getdigitalinc.com

Moondog Digital, Inc.

http://www.moondogdigital.com/ (888) CDS-2-MP3 info@moondogdigital.com

MusicRip, Ltd.

http://www.musicrip.com/ orders@musicrip.com

PacificRip

http://www.pacificrip.com/ (888) RIP-DISC info@pacificrip.com

ReadyToPlay

http://www.readytoplay.com/ (650) 213-9300 sales@readytoplay.com

RipDigital

http://www.ripdigital.com/ (877) 759-3914

Riplt Digital LLC

http://www.RipltDigital.com 773-600-4733 info@RipItDigital.com

RipShark, LLC.

http://www.ripshark.com/ (800) 379-3515 contact@ripshark.com

RipTopia

http://www.riptopia.com/ (800) 874-4921

Slim Devices, Inc.

http://www.slimdevices.com/ (650) 210-9400 sales@slimdevices.com

Cleaner / Polish Manufacturers

iCleaner

http://www.ipodcleaner.com/ info@ipodcleaner.com

RadTech, LLC.

http://www.radtech.us/ (314) 209-9993 info@radtech.us

Customizing Services

ColorWare, Inc.

http://www.colorwarepc.com/ (888) 452-6567 sales@color-ware.com

ETCHamac, LLC.

http://www.etchamac.com/ (480) 964-6352 sales@etchamac.com

iPodMods

http://www.ipodmods.com/ (888) 763-6637 sales@ipodmods.com

FM Transmitter Manufacturers

Battery Technology, Inc. (BTI)

http://www.battervtech.com/ (626) 336-6878 info@batterytech.com

C. Crane

http://www.ccrane.com/ (800) 522-8863 ccraneco@aol.com

Griffin Technology

http://www.griffintechnology.com/ (615) 399-7000 support@griffintechnology.com

Kensington

http://www.kensington.com/ (650) 572-2700

Macally

http://www.macally.com/ (626) 338-8787 info@macally.com

Maxell

http://www.maxell-usa.com/ (800) 533-2836 techsupp@maxell.com

Monster Cable Products, Inc.

http://www.monstercable.com/ (415) 840-2000

Sonnet Tech

http://www.podfrea.com/ (949) 472-2772 support@sonnettech.com

Tekkeon

http://www.tekkeon.com/ (888) 787-5888 Support@Tekkeon.com

XtremeMac

http://www.xtrememac.com/ (954) 385-9877 support@xtrememac.com

Head/Earphone Manufacturers

Altec Lansing Technologies, Inc.

http://www.alteclansing.com/ (866) 570-5702 csupport@alteclansing.com

BlueTake

http://www.bluetake.com/ (626) 369-9888 usa@bluetake.com

BoxWave

http://www.boxwave.com/ customerservice@boxwave.com

Etymotic

http://www.etymotic.com/ (847) 228-0006 customer-service@etymotic.com

Headbanger Audio

(800) 331-3844 support@headbangeraudio.com

Loaitech

http://www.logitech.com/ (510) 795-8500

Macally

(626) 338-8787 info@macally.com

Sennheiser

(860) 434-9190 info@sennheiserusa.com

(847) 600-2000 info@shure.com

http://www.simpl.com/ support@simpl.com

Sony

http://www.sony.com http://esupport.sony.com/EN/feedback/ emailform-cons.html

TEN Technology

http://www.tentechnology.com/ (800) 518-4TEN info@tentechnology.com

Ultimate Ears

http://www.ultimateears.com/ (800) 589-6531 customerservice@ultimateears.com

Wi-Gear, Inc.

http://www.wi-gear.com/ (866) 434-4930

iPod & iTunes Hardware Manufacturers

Apple

http://www.apple.com/ (800) 275-2273

Hewlett-Packard

http://www.hp.com/ (650) 857-1501

Motorola

http://www.hellomoto.com/ (866) 730-5407

Remote Manufacturers

Advanced Bridging Technologies, Inc.

http://www.abtech2.com/ (888) 869-4737

Battery Technology, Inc. (BTI)

http://www.batterytech.com/ (626) 336-6878 info@batterytech.com

Engineered Audio, LLC.

http://www.engineeredaudio.com/ (636) 898-1053 support@engineeredaudio.com

Griffin Technology

http://www.griffintechnology.com/ (615) 399-7000 support@griffintechnology.com

Kensington

http://www.kensington.com/ (650) 572-2700

Maxell

http://www.maxell-usa.com/ (800) 533-2836 techsupp@maxell.com

Nyko

http://www.nyko.com/ (888) 444-NYKO customersupport@nyko.com

Pacific Rim Technologies

http://www.pacrimtechnologies.com/ (949) 481-2443 info@pacrimtechnologies.com

Targus Group International, Inc.

http://www.targus.com/ (877) 482-7487

TEN Technology

http://www.tentechnology.com/ (800) 518-4TEN info@tentechnology.com

Repair Services

Apple

http://www.apple.com/ (800) 275-2273

BrokeniPods

http://www.brokenipods.com/ (877) 293-0701 sales@brokenipods.com

DT&T Computer Services, Inc.

http://dttservice.com/ipod/ (800) 622-7977 customerservice@dttservice.com

iPodMechanic

http://ipodmechanic.com/ (877) 726-0608 info@ipodmechanic.com

iPodMods

http://www.ipodmods.com/ (888) 763-6637 sales@ipodmods.com

iPodResQ

http://www.ipodresg.com/ (877) POD-REPA info@ipodresq.com

iPodRestore

http://ipod.techrestore.com/ (877) FOR-IPOD help@techrestore.com

Minilec Service, Inc.

http://www.minilec.com/ (800) 222-6075 info@minilec.com

PDASmart

http://www.pdasmart.com/ (512) 258-4500 info@PDASmart.com

TechRestore, Inc.

http://techrestore.com/ (866) 967-3786 help@techrestore.com

UKiPodRepairs

http://www.ukipodrepairs.co.uk/ info@ukipodrepairs.co.uk

Software Developers (iPod)

Enrique Quintero Design

http://www.enriquequintero design.com/ enrique@enriquequinterodesign.com

Helmes Innovations

http://www.helmesinnovations.com/ CustomerFeedback@Helmes Innovations.com

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(800) 222-7669

http://www.headbangeraudio.com/

http://www.macally.com/

http://www.sennheiserusa.com/

Shure

http://www.shure.com/

Simpl Acoustics

iPodSoft

http://www.ipodsoft.com/

PumpPod, LLC.

http://www.pumppod.com/ info@pumppod.com

TalkingPanda, LLC.

http://www.talkingpanda.com/ support@talkingpanda.com

Tanagra, Inc.

http://www.tanagra.com/ info@tanagra.com

ThinkFree

http://www.thinkfree.com/ (408) 432-5074 info@thinkfree.com

WuHan Venus Software, Inc.

http://ipod-application.com/ 86-27-88613551 support@ipod-application.com

Software Developers (Mac)

Bruno Blondeau

http://podmanager.bruno blondeau.com/ contact@brunoblondeau.com

Crisp Softies

http://www.crispsofties.com/ cris@crispSofties.com

Findley Designs

http://www.ipodaccess.com/ FindleyDesigns@drewfindley.com

Griffin Technology

http://www.griffintechnology.com/ (615) 399-7000 support@griffintechnology.com

Helmes Innovations

http://www.helmesinnovations.com/ CustomerFeedback@Helmes Innovations.com

iPodSoft

http://www.ipodsoft.com/

KennettNet Software Limited

http://www.kennettnet.co.uk/ support@kennettnet.co.uk

Lighthead Software

http://www.lightheadsw.com/ info@lightheadsw.com

Manfred Schwind

http://www.mani.de/index.html mani@mani.de

Mibasoft

http://www.mibasoft.com/

Michael Zapp

http://www.cs.umanitoba.ca/ ~zapp/MacOSX/ zapp@computer.org

Micromat

http://www.micromat.com/ (800) 829-6227 info@micromat.com

Odeo

http://www.odeo.com/ stuff@odeo.com

Pariahware, Inc.

http://www.pariahware.com/ info@pariahware.com

PumpPod, LLC.

http://www.pumppod.com/ info@pumppod.com

Sci-Fi Hi-Fi

http://www.scifihifi.com/ podworks@scifihifi.com

Sonic Solutions (Roxio)

http://www.roxio.com/ (866) 280-ROXI

TalkingPanda, LLC.

http://www.talkingpanda.com/ support@talkingpanda.com

The Little App Factory

http://www.thelittleappfactory.com/

Wam Communications Group

http://www.dotpod.net/ +61 2 9869 8066 office@buyitonline.com.au

WuHan Venus Software, Inc.

http://ipod-application.com/ 86-27-88613551 support@ipod-application.com

youPod

http://www.kaisakura.com/youPod/

ZappTek

http://www.zapptek.com/ support@zapptek.com

Zelek Software

http://www.zeleksoftware.com/ support@zeleksoftware.com

Software Developers (PC)

Applian Technologies Inc.

http://www.replay-video.com/

Findley Designs

http://www.ipodaccess.com/ FindleyDesigns@drewfindley.com

Griffin Technology

http://www.griffintechnology.com/ (615) 399-7000 support@griffintechnology.com

Helmes Innovations

http://www.helmesinnovations.com/ CustomerFeedback@Helmes Innovations.com

iPodSoft

http://www.ipodsoft.com/

iPodSync

http://www.ipod-sync.com/ support@ipod-sync.com

J. River, Inc.

http://www.jrmediacenter.com/

KennettNet Software Limited

http://www.kennettnet.co.uk/ support@kennettnet.co.uk

Mediafour Corporation

http://www.mediafour.com/ (515) 225-7409

Odeo

http://www.odeo.com/ stuff@odeo.com

Pariahware, Inc.

http://www.pariahware.com/ info@pariahware.com

PumpPod, LLC.

http://www.pumppod.com/ info@pumppod.com

Rataiik Software

http://www.stationripper.com

Red Chair Software, Inc.

http://www.redchairsoftware.com/

TalkingPanda, LLC.

http://www.talkingpanda.com/ support@talkingpanda.com

Tanagra, Inc.

http://www.tanagra.com/ info@tanagra.com

ThinkFree

http://www.thinkfree.com/ (408) 432-5074 info@thinkfree.com

Wind Solutions

http://www.copypod.net/ copypod@copypod.net

WuHan Venus Software, Inc.

http://ipod-application.com/ 86-27-88613551 support@ipod-application.com

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Zelek Software

http://www.zeleksoftware.com/ support@zeleksoftware.com

Speaker & Mic Manufacturers

Altec Lansing Technologies, Inc. http://www.alteclansing.com/ (866) 570-5702 csupport@alteclansing.com

Belkin

http://www.belkin.com/ (800) 223-5546 ex 2263 techsupp@belkin.com

Bose

http://www.bose.com 1-800-999-2673 ext W99

Denon Electronics

http://www.usa.denon.com/ (973) 396-0810 contactservice@denonni.com

Digital Age Products

http://www.digitalageproducts.com/ (888) 716-6395 info@digitalageproducts.com

Digital Lifestyle Outfitters

http://www.dlodirect.com/ (800) 866-IPOD customerservice@everythingipod.com

Ignitek

http://www.ignitek.com/ (949) 660-0488 esupport@ignitek.com

iHome Audio

http://www.ihomeaudio.com/ (800)288-2792 ihainfo@ihomeaudio.com

iRock

http://www.mvirock.com/ (847) 202-1900 info@fidinc.com

JBL

http://www.jbl.com/ (516) 255-4JBL

Klipsch

http://www.klipsch.com/ (800) KLIPSCH support@klipsch.com

Macally

http://www.macallv.com/ (626) 338-8787 info@macally.com

Monitor Audio

http://www.monitoraudio.com/ +44 (0) 1268 740580

Mythix, Inc.

http://www.mythix-inc.com/ (888) 885-5858 info@mythix-inc.com

Numark Industries, LLC

http://numark.com/ (401) 658-3131 info@numark.com

Nyko

http://www.nyko.com/ (888) 444-NYKO customersupport@nyko.com

Oregon Scientific

http://www.oregonscientific.com (949) 608-2848 customerrelations@oscientific.com

Pacific Rim Technologies

http://www.pacrimtechnologies.com/ (949) 481-2443 info@pacrimtechnologies.com

PodGear

http://www.podgear.net/ +44 (0) 1494 522 721 info@disruptivegroup.com

PsiberAudio

http://www.psiberaudio.com/ (65) 6220-4240 andrew@psiberaudio.com

Tivoli Audio

http://www.tivoliaudio.com/ (877) 297-9479 mail@tivoliaudio.com

Tunewear

http://www.tunewear.com/ info@tunewear.com

Stand & Mount Manufacturers

Belkin

http://www.belkin.com/ (800) 223-5546 ex 2263 techsupp@belkin.com

BookEndz

http://www.photo-control.com/bookendz/ (800) 787-8078

Bubble Design

http://www.bubbledesign.com/ (650) 988-9090 info@bubbledesign.com

Digital Age Products

http://www.digitalageproducts.com/ (888) 716-6395 info@digitalageproducts.com

Digital Lifestyle Outfitters

http://www.dlodirect.com/ (800) 866-IPOD customerservice@everythingipod.com

iPort/Sonance

http://www.iportmusic.com/ (800) 582-7777 customerservice@sonance.com

Maxell

http://www.maxell-usa.com/ (800) 533-2836 techsupp@maxell.com

MuffPod

http://muffpod.com/ sales@muffpod.com

Pacific Rim Technologies

http://www.pacrimtechnologies.com/ (949) 481-2443 info@pacrimtechnologies.com

PodGear

http://www.podgear.net/ +44 (0) 1494 522 721 info@disruptivegroup.com

Power Support (USA), Inc.

http://www.powersupportusa.com/ (818) 558-1645 CustomerService@ PowerSupportUSA.com

Pressure Drop, Inc.

http://pressuredropinc.com/ (541) 382-2197 products@pressuredropinc.com

ProClip

http://www.proclipusa.com/ (800) 296-3212 support@proclipusa.com

Pro-Fit International, Inc. http://www.pro-fit-intl.com/

(800) 388-0073 sales@pro-fit-intl.com

Pyrim Technologies

http://www.pyrim.com/ (469) 366-4440 support@pyrim.com

Speck Products

http://www.speckproducts.com/ (650) 463-8914 info@speckproducts.com

Thought Out

http://www.thoughtout.biz/ info@thoughtout.biz

Westshore Craftworks, LLC.

http://www.westshorecraftworks.com/







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Backstage at iLounge. Though we spend lots of time with our iPods, our frequently updated Editors' Blog (backstage.ilounge.com) is packed with tangents off the beaten iPod path. Here are just a few of them.



Oakley **Thump 2**

If buzz within the iPod accessory industry can be believed, wearable electronics are about to explode in popularity in 2006. Oakley's been ahead of that curve since last year's



Thump 2 (\$295 and up) enhances its predecessor's audio quality, storage capacity, and style, adding comfortable earbuds to the company's already-popular Gascan sunglasses. We liked these a ton more than last year's model.



Nintendo **Game Boy Micro**

Utterly dominating an industry isn't an easy feat:

Nintendo succeeded in the 1980s with its NES game

console, and has continued to the present day with

its Game Boys. The latest iteration of Game Boy isn't a

step ahead in technology - it's actually a step behind the

company's two-screened \$129 Nintendo DS console. But

about the size of an iPod mini - and go anywhere you go, at

any time. Each of the two current models includes

three changeable face plates, with more planned for

sale separately, so you can customize its looks. While

small, the screen is impressively bright and detailed;

good enough for last year's Game Boy Advance games,

Game Boy Micro (\$99) is designed to be super-small -

which it plays.

Zizzle **iZ**

Adults don't get it. Kids love it. Like i-Dog, **iZ** (\$39.99) is a musical toy that can be connected to an iPod or used separately. Think of it as a junior music remixing tool in a freaky alien body.





Motorola E680i: iTunes Inside?

Leave it to Motorola CEO Ed Zander to shatter Apple's famed mystique: following the disappointing launch of his own ROKR E1 phone in September, Zander disclosed that Apple was working on something more ambitious. "[W]e know



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that they are going to build a smart phone," said Zander, "it's only a matter of time." Conveniently, Moto has a Linuxbased phone (E680i, above) that's ripe for retrofitting, and reports have suggested that new RAZRs will play iTunes.

Closing the Curtain. Introduced several months ago, our Lounge Poll snapshots what thousands of our readers really think about developments in the worlds of iPod & iTunes. Now we want more of your opinions.

Lounge Poll: Surprising Results

It's hard to take the pulse of each - or even most - of the nearly 3 million visitors iLounge has every month.

But with the Lounge Poll, we try. Each week or two, we pick a hot topic that's generating discussion elsewhere on the site, and open it up to a simple one-click poll. As you'd expect, every reader gets one vote. And we try to close each poll after we've received around 5,000 responses - enough for at least a modest degree of statistical value.

Results have been telling, and occasionally surprising. Even though we cater to iPod owners and people considering iPod purchases, our readers skew conservative, practical, and surprisingly mainstream. They don't need iTunes phones or video as much as they want replaceable batteries and FM tuners. And they often buy enough Gigs of space to last a while.

Will you buy an iTunes-compatible phone?

- 53% No, I don't have a need for a cell phone with music abilities
- **26%** Yes, but only if it has an Apple-inspired design
- **8%** No, for any other reason
- 5% No, I don't have a cell phone and don't want one
- **4%** Yes, even if it looks like a standard Motorola phone
- **3%** Yes, for any other reason

Which feature do you most want Apple to add to iPods?

- **26%** Replaceable Battery
- **24%** Radio Tuning
- 21% Video Playback
- 17% Bluetooth Wireless
- 6% Something Else5% More Games
- **2%** Sports Features

Which iPod nano will you buy?

- **44%** 4GB Black
- **24%** 4GB White
- **21%** None
- **7%** 2GB Black
- **4%** 2GB White

What do you use your iPod for?

- **56%** Music only
- **24%** Music/data storage
- **12%** Music/data/photo storage, on-iPod photo display
- **7%** Music/data/photo storage

Comments and Forums: Hot Spots



Most of the opinions expressed by iLounge readers are found in two places: the comment threads to our articles, and our forums. Amazingly, we occasionally see that people are still discussing year-old articles, and there are forum topics that have been going on for longer than that. Even though people occasionally abuse both the comments and the forums, we view them as important parts of the iLounge community: places where other people can share perspectives different from ours, and build on the information we've provided. The only problem is that these extra perspectives and information can be hard to find.

Reader Editorials: Talk and Debate



That's why we've come up with reader editorials. When it's obvious that readers are passionate about certain issues, but the conversations are getting split up by separate news stories, we'll create a new Reader Editorial to give everyone a chance to express their opinions in a centralized place. Do you have a message you want to send to iPod accessory makers? Something you want to say to Apple to get off of your chest? We hope that you'll use the Reader Editorial to do it. Who knows: the thoughtful comment you make may wind up improving the next iPod, iTunes, or the next big iPod add-on. Our last one was on iPod accessory prices. What's next? We're listening; you tell us.

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